

Draft

Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
for the
Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail
in the City of San Clemente

March 2003

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Final Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration

for the

Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail in the City of San Clemente

City of San Clemente

June 2003


Cotton/Bridges/Associates
A Division of P&D Consultants

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) prepared to address the environmental effects of a proposed 2.37 mile pedestrian beach trail in the City of San Clemente. **Figure 1** depicts the general location of the trail along the San Clemente coastline. The proposed trail is located within the existing Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) railroad right-of-way beginning at the North Beach Transit Station and extending south to Calafia State Park.

This document addresses the potential environmental effects of the City of San Clemente's Pedestrian Beach Trail project and fulfills requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires that potential environmental effects of a project be evaluated prior to implementation. In addition, if a project receives funding from a federal funding source, the project must also be evaluated under the guidelines of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A separate Categorical Exclusion will be processed through Caltrans to meet the NEPA requirements for the proposed project.

The proposed trail corridor is located in a very unique location. Along the majority of the City's coastline a physical barrier exists in the form of steep coastal bluffs and the OCTA railroad line. This situation makes access to State and City beaches difficult, dangerous, and in many cases impossible for beach users. This is the only location in Southern California that has this unique interface with the beach, railroad, and coastal bluffs. Over the past 75 years a substantial number of informal (non-licensed) trails have been created at accessible points along the coastal bluffs and adjacent to the railroad tracks. There are only four licensed crossings with safety improvements that have been created; however, there are an additional nine access points (for a total of 13) within the project area that are designated as public beach access points in the City's Coastal Element. The Coastal Element (as the City's Coastal Land Use Plan) has been approved and certified by the California Coastal Commission. In addition to those, there are countless numbers of informal trails that people use to access the beach. There is also a well established trail that parallels the tracks that is used by pedestrians, people walking their dogs, joggers, and mountain bikes. There are approximately 2.3 million beach visitors per year in the City, Table 1 provides the approximate annual usage of each beach (state and local) within the City of San Clemente.

The City has determined through internal discussion and a community participation program (Railroad Corridor Safety and Education Panel) that many improved crossings are needed along the City's coastline to provide safe and reliable access to the state and City beaches. The combination of providing a pedestrian trail that links the proposed trail crossings will improve beach access and safety for the approximately 2.3 million beach visitors (which equates to a minimum 4.6 million railroad track crossings) per year.

The City has secured and is pursuing state and federal grant funds for the design and construction of the Pedestrian Beach Trail project. The OCTA has preliminarily approved Federal Transportation Equity Act (TEA) funds for the proposed project. At this time, other funds have been committed through a State Bikeway and Pedestrian Facilities Grant, State Coastal Conservancy Grant, State Proposition 12 Grant, Air Quality Funds, and the City General Fund.

Figure 1
Regional Location

TABLE 1
STATE AND CITY BEACH USE BY LOCATION
CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE

Beach	Annual Visitors	Summer	Winter	Spring/Fall
<i>Local Beaches</i>				
North Beach	599,998	377,999	102,000	120,000
Dije	22,500	14,175	3,825	4,500
El Portal	22,500	14,175	3,825	4,500
Mariposa	15,000	9,450	2,550	3,000
Linda Lane	100,000	63,000	17,000	20,000
Corto Lane	20,000	12,600	3,400	4,000
Pier	805,000	507,150	136,850	161,000
T Street	400,002	252,001	68,000	80,000
Boca del Canon	5,000	3,150	850	1,000
Lost Winds	10,000	6,300	1,700	2,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,000,000</i>	<i>1,260,000</i>	<i>340,000</i>	<i>400,000</i>
<i>State Beaches</i>				
Riviera	39,000	24,570	6,630	7,800
Montalvo	1,000	630	170	200
Calafia	80,000	50,400	13,600	16,000
State Park	180,000	113,400	30,600	36,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>300,000</i>	<i>189,000</i>	<i>51,000</i>	<i>60,000</i>
Total (all beaches)	2,300,000	1,449,000	391,000	460,000

Source: City of San Clemente

Background

In 1999, the City of San Clemente City Council voted to reject the first design proposal for a coastal trail system within the railroad corridor. The City Council believed the previously proposed project was incompatible with San Clemente's village character and natural beach environment. The Council had concerns over limited beach access, fencing, aesthetics, hard structure encroachment onto the beach, and the potential impact on beach erosion. To address these concerns, the Railroad Corridor Safety and Education Panel (RCSEP) was formed to assess and find solutions for pedestrians moving parallel to and across the railroad tracks. This resulted in a revised plan that both increases pedestrian safety and blends well with the beach environment and village character of the City. The currently proposed project as analyzed in this report has been designed to incorporate the recommendations contained in the RCSEP *Safety Recommendations for the San Clemente Railroad Corridor* report, which is included in this Draft Initial Study/MND as Appendix A.

The RCSEP mission statement is:

To reach consensus on preferred solutions to increase public safety and enhance public access within the railroad corridor in the City of San Clemente, while preserving the natural ambiance and natural beach resources.

Based on this mission statement, three primary safety goals evolved:

- \$ Safety issues associated with crossing the railroad tracks at designated beach access points as found in the City's Local Coastal Program;
- \$ Safety issues associated with pedestrians traveling parallel to the railroad tracks within the railroad right of way; and
- \$ Safety Education.

The following are design criteria elements identified in the *Safety Recommendations for the San Clemente Railroad Corridor*:

- \$ All projects considered along the railroad corridor and on the beach should be natural in nature and not encroach on to the beach or tidelands.
- \$ No new seawalls, revetments or jetties should be utilized to construct improvements on the beach.
- \$ Avoid the use of hard surface materials such as asphalt or concrete whenever possible.
- \$ The use of fences should be avoided and in general the beach should not be fenced or blocked from the public, most barriers should take the form of wood and rope, rocks or natural vegetation.
- \$ Always consider the natural feel and character of San Clemente's beach as an asset that shall be protected.

- \$ Improvements to the beach should be minimal; less is more. (While opening up the beach to a wide segment of the population is desirable, there are some areas that may not be amendable to access or travel by all without damaging the very beach we all love and, therefore, should not be developed).
- \$ Improvements that come in contact with the forces of the ocean need to be stable but non-permanent and easily removable by design. When possible, the City does not want an increase in permanent coastal structures beyond what is currently present.
- \$ To avoid future safety, erosion, and environmental problems, consider relocation when repairing, replacing, or upgrading existing facilities on the beach.

Environmental Requirements

National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is the country's basic national charter for environmental responsibility. It establishes an environmental policy for the nation, provides an interdisciplinary framework for environmental planning by federal agencies, and contains action-forcing procedures to ensure that federal agency decision makers take environmental factors into account.

NEPA review and approval for this project is conducted by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration. The City has submitted a Preliminary Environmental Study (PES) form for the project to Caltrans. Based on consultations with Caltrans, NEPA documentation requirements will be met through preparation of a Categorical Exclusion with technical studies for the project under NEPA.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provides for the use of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) when the potential environmental effects identified during the Initial Study process are reduced through project modifications which eliminate significant environmental impacts or reduce them to a level of insignificance (Pub. Resources Code, ' 21080, subd. (c); CEQA Guidelines, ' 1500, subd. (h), 15070, subd. (b))

Under CEQA Guidelines, the contents of a Negative Declaration shall include the following components:

- a. A brief description of the proposed project, including any commonly used name for the project;
- b. The location of the project and the name of the project proponent; and
- c. A finding that the project, as proposed, will not have a significant effect on the environment.

The MND and supporting IS are required to satisfy the requirements of CEQA.

Early Agency Consultation

In accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21080.3, the City has conducted early consultation with various state and federal agencies that may have jurisdiction over any resources affected by the proposed project. These agencies include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The purpose of this interagency consultation is to ensure that all affected agencies have a voice in the decision as to whether an EIR should be prepared for the project. None of the agencies consulted indicated that an EIR should be prepared for the project. An initial determination by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated that the project may be subject to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and a Section 404 may be required for the project. However, the wetland delineation prepared for the project indicates that the project will not impact jurisdictional wetlands. If it is ultimately determined that the project is subject to a Section 404 permit, then a Section 401 certification or waiver would be required from the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Project Site Ownership

Implementation of the project requires the City to obtain an easement/license agreement from OCTA to construct and maintain the proposed trail improvements. The trail is located within OCTA's right-of-way. The beach from North Beach to Riviera is owned by the City and the beach from Riviera to Calafia is owned by the State of California.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of a multi-use trail located adjacent to the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) railroad right-of-way in the City of San Clemente. The trail is proposed to extend from North Beach (Metrolink Commuter Station) south to Calafia State Park, a length of approximately 2.37 miles. Currently, some beach users access the beach from licensed and improved crossings; however, most people use existing access points designated in the City's Coastal Element that are not licensed or improved. There is also a well established informal trail that exists along the proposed coastal trail alignment. This informal trail provides adequate separation for pedestrians; however, there are a number of pinch points along the informal trail that force people to walk very close and/or on the railroad tracks. The proposed project will create a well defined trail with barriers between the pedestrians and the railroad and will eliminate safety hazards at the pinch points along the trail. **Figures 2 through 5** depict the proposed coastal trail alignment and proposed improvements. The trail begins on the east side of the tracks south of the Metrolink Commuter Station. From the Metrolink Commuter Station the trail extends south to Corto Lane. At Corto Lane, the trail then crosses the tracks and continues southward on the west side of the tracks until it reaches the T-Street restrooms. At T-Street the trail crosses back over to the east side of the tracks and continues to its endpoint at Calafia State Park. The trail will accommodate two-way, non-motorized uses and limited motorized uses (motorized wheelchairs, maintenance equipment and emergency vehicles from the Pier to T-Street). The proposed project is a multi-use trail¹ that will allow walkers (dogs on leashes), joggers, mountain bicyclists, and wheelchair users. The trail is comprised of four components: the trail; barriers; crossings; and landscaping. Maintenance vehicles and equipment will also use the railroad right-of-way. The trail will be designed to allow continued access for maintenance of the railroad and utilities within the OCTA right-of-way.

A. Trail

The coastal trail will be constructed generally as a five foot wide trail and may have a shoulder on one or both sides achieving a total width of 10 feet to allow for periodic railroad and City maintenance. The trail will be constructed with a two percent cross slope, sloping in one direction for drainage. The edge of the trail will be located a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the centerline of the railroad tracks. **Figures 2 through 5** depict the proposed trail improvements for the entire length of the trail alignment. **Figure 6** depicts the trail section at the existing Marine Safety headquarters. **Figure 11** provides a visual simulation of the trail, and is an example of the proposed character of the trail. The trail will be constructed of stabilized decomposed granite or natural soil (existing conditions). Proposed bridges will be constructed of wood. Railroad track crossings will be constructed of asphalt wearing surfaces or rubberized asphalt.

¹People will be required to walk their bikes around Mariposa Point at the elevated boardwalk, dogs will not be allowed between Corto Lane and T-Street where the trail is on the beach side of the railroad.

Between T Street and Calafia some portions of the trail are in good condition and will not be altered from its existing condition. Where improvements to the existing informal trail are required, the trail will be constructed of natural materials (e.g., soil, decomposed granite, or wood). The proposed trail improvements include: minor re-grading of the existing trail with drainage improvements, minor re-grading the existing trail with minor improvements, proposed elevated boardwalk section of the trail (between El Portal and Mariposa, the elevated boardwalk is proposed for safety considerations as the trail in this particular area curves around a point and gets very close to the railroad track), and proposed pedestrian bridges (at four locations at various points along the trail). **Figure 7** depicts a typical section of the Mariposa elevated boardwalk. **Figure 8** depicts a visual simulation of the proposed Mariposa elevated boardwalk.

Construction of the trail will also involve minor drainage improvements which are limited to French drains or vertical drains. These will be installed only in areas where water collects (i.e. North Beach to Riviera) and in all cases will gravity flow out to existing drainage culverts.

Pedestrian bridges are also proposed at Trafalgar, Riviera, and Montalvo. These pedestrian bridges would span existing drainages in the same location (i.e. parallel to) of existing railroad bridges. **Figure 8** is a visual simulation of the proposed Mariposa Elevated Boardwalk; however, this figure depicts the materials and character proposed for the pedestrian bridges at Trafalgar, Riviera, and Montalvo. **Figure 21** depicts the location of the proposed pedestrian bridge at Riviera. As shown, proposed at this location is a pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge, 5 feet in width, and approximately 32 feet long. **Figure 22** depicts the location of the proposed pedestrian bridge at Montalvo. As shown, proposed at this location is a pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge, 5 feet in width, and approximately 104 feet long. **Figure 23** depicts the location of the proposed pedestrian bridge at Trafalgar. As shown, proposed at this location is a pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge, 10 feet in width, and approximately 64 feet long.

B. Fencing and Barriers

Fencing and barriers and/or buffer treatments are proposed between the trail and the railroad tracks. These are an important component of the overall trail as they will ensure safe use of the trail by pedestrians and bicyclists. There are several types of barriers and/or buffers proposed, depending on the location: native landscape restoration area or buffer planting; new boulders to provide buffer from the railroad; a railroad tie buffer wall; four foot high - three rail barrier; three foot high - two rail barrier; a new six foot high welded wire fence; and a six foot high welded wire fence (this fence would replace a fence that was previously washed out by El Nino storms). **Figures 2 through 5** depict the type and location of each barrier and/or buffer proposed along the entire trail alignment. **Figure 5a** depicts the typical three rail fence proposed for the project. **Table 2** (on the next page) depicts the existing fencing length along the trail corridor and proposed fencing/barrier length along the trail corridor.

Note that trail construction will not impact existing native vegetation. The portion of the trail that is proposed to be planted with native plants is an opportunity for enhancement and restoration of native vegetation.

Railroad Track Crossings

There are currently numerous unsafe, illegal crossings at various points along the trail corridor. To address these unsafe, illegal crossings and to enhance beach access, three general criteria (cost, physical constraints, and usage) were used to identify the appropriate crossing type at each proposed railroad crossing location. Based on the criteria (primarily due to physical constraints related to undercrossings), in general, at-grade crossings are the preferred railroad crossing type. However, undercrossings could become the City's preferred crossing alternative at particular locations if additional funding becomes available and the physical constraints of the particular area under consideration could accommodate an undercrossing. If the physical constraints of an area allow an undercrossing, and funding is available, the final consideration becomes long-term usage reliability. For example, undercrossings tend to become impassable due to high-tides and debris/sand blockage. Also, some undercrossings would require periodic sand replenishment in order to create a safe pedestrian entrance to the beach.

One of the project's goals is to increase the number of legal, improved at-grade railroad crossings in order to improve access to the beach and to provide safe beach access alternatives. **Table 3** identifies the railroad crossing alternatives available at each proposed crossing location. **Figure 9** depicts the locations of existing and proposed crossings. **Figures 10 through 26** depict the proposed crossing alternatives in a linear north-south direction. The combination of fencing and barriers in conjunction with new crossings will eliminate existing unsafe illegal crossings.

TABLE 2
EXISTING AND PROPOSED BARRIER LENGTH
SAN CLEMENTE RAILROAD CORRIDOR PEDESTRIAN BEACH TRAIL

Barrier Type	Figure 1 North Beach to Mariposa (feet)	% of Trail Frontage	Figure 2 Mariposa to T Street (feet)	% of Trail Frontage	Figure 3 T Street to Riviera (feet)	% of Trail Frontage	Figure 4 Riviera to Calafia (feet)	% of Trail Frontage	% of Total Trail Frontage
Existing natural grade separation barrier	40	1.13	84	2.38	2,120	60.14	1,215	62.73	27.65
Proposed buffer planting	149	4.23	0	0	228	6.47	0	0	3.01
<i>Total (existing + proposed)</i>	189	5.36%	84	2.38%	2,348	66.61%	1,215	62.73%	30.66%
Existing fencing (all types)	340	9.65	1,730	49.08	844	23.94	115	5.94	24.21
Proposed Railroad tie buffer wall	0	0	0	0	0	0	480	24.78	3.84
Proposed 4 foot - 3 rail barrier	1,745	49.50	760	21.56	200	5.67	0	0	21.62
Proposed 3 foot - 2 rail barrier	560	15.89	263	7.46	0	0	0	0	6.58
Proposed 6 foot welded wire barrier	0	0	620	17.59	0	0	0	0	4.96
Proposed Boardwalk or bridge barrier	691	19.60	68	1.93	0	0	127	6.56	7.08
<i>Total (existing + proposed)</i>	3,336	94.64%	3,441	97.59%	1,044	29.61%	722	37.28%	68.29%
Total (all barriers)	3,525	100%	3,525	100%	3,392	96.22%	1,937	100%	98.95%

Source: Borthwick, Guy, Bettenhausen, March 2002.

TABLE 3
PROPOSED CROSSINGS
SAN CLEMENTE RAILROAD CORRIDOR PEDESTRIAN BEACH TRAIL

Crossing Location	Proposed Crossing	Alternative Crossing	Rationale: At-Grade	Rationale: Undercrossing
Dije Court Annual Use 22,500	New At-Grade	Undercrossing	The existing Dije Court access provides stairs from the coastal bluff but there is currently no safe way to cross the railroad tracks. The 22,500 people that use this access annually cross at a variety of locations once entering the railroad right-of-way. Once crossing the tracks, the riprap on the beach side makes it difficult to access the beach. The proposed access will channel people to one location, provide a safe crossing point and ease access over the existing riprap. The at-grade will provide year around access and is the preferred solution for Dije. A Number 8" crossing signal will be provided.	At this time funding is not available. If an under crossing was developed at this location it would experience periodic closure due to tide and storm debris. The City is concerned that due to this access's distance from any City maintenance facilities it will be very difficult to keep the access clear utilizing a tractor. There is also a concern that if the undercrossing is inaccessible, people will cross at-grade. However, this solution provides grade separation favored by rail agencies.
El Portal Annual Use 22,500	At-Grade and Improved Undercrossing		Currently, beach access is difficult, either over the riprap or under the bridge trestle (approx. 4 foot clearance). Improving the undercrossing would only provide seasonal access. The current condition mirrors the Dije access, with people crossing at-grade and at a variety of locations. The proposed access will provide safe year around beach access. A Number 8" crossing signal will be provided.	SCRRA recently installed a bridge trestle that does not provide adequate headroom. The revetment is poor and access is shared with stormdrain outfall. Periodic closure is expected due to tide and stormdrain debris. The objective is to provide better headroom and separate pedestrian access from low flow nuisance water runoff. This access by itself cannot provide reliable public access to the beach.
Mariposa Annual Use 15,000	New Undercrossing	At-Grade	An at-grade crossing was reviewed as an option as to not eliminate Local Coastal Plan beach access. However, due to limited sight distance around Mariposa Point, the at-grade crossing is not considered to be the optimal means of crossing the railroad tracks at this location. However, the community does not want to lose an Local Coastal Plan beach access, so until funding becomes available for an undercrossing, the City will pursue an application to regulatory agencies for an at-grade crossing.	An undercrossing is the preferred alternative at this location due to the limited site distance around Mariposa Point. The <i>Recommendations for the San Clemente Railroad Corridor</i> report did not recommend a crossing at this point; however, during public workshops the community expressed that they do not want to lose an Local Coastal Plan beach access. Currently, funding is not available for an undercrossing.
North Linda Lane Annual Use 100,000	Improved Undercrossing			The current access utilizes an existing concrete box storm drain that crosses under the tracks. Due to the conflicts with the stormwater and ocean, this access is often flooded or blocked with debris. The project proposes a handicap ramp from the adjacent parking lot and to improve access somewhat by separating the stormwater drainage area from beach access. Periodic closure is expected due to tide and stormwater debris.

TABLE 3
PROPOSED CROSSINGS
SAN CLEMENTE RAILROAD CORRIDOR PEDESTRIAN BEACH TRAIL

Crossing Location	Proposed Crossing	Alternative Crossing	Rationale: At-Grade	Rationale: Undercrossing
South Linda Lane Annual Use 100,000	New At-Grade	Improved Undercrossing	Currently, beach access at this location is primarily at-grade with approximately eight different crossing locations. Beach access over the existing riprap is difficult. Developing an at-grade crossing will provide safe convenient beach access. Year around handicap access is intended for the Corto Lane at-grade access to the south. A Number 8" crossing signal will be provided.	Area topography will allow a pedestrian underpass at this location. However, funding is not currently available to improve this underpass. Periodic closure is expected due to tide and stormwater debris. However, this crossing location is near the Marine Safety headquarters, which will make it easier to maintain utilizing a tractor. This solution does not provide for handicap access which is intended to be served by Corto Lane.
Corto Lane Annual Use 20,000	Improved At-Grade		A private crossing currently exists at this location. The project will improve this crossing to a Number 9" crossing in order to provide a crossing point for the linear trail and safe convenient handicap beach access serving the Pier Bowl area.	Because this access point is one where the entire trail crosses the railroad tracks, an underpass is not feasible. Topography and the ramping necessary to meet ADA requirements, and environmental considerations make this option infeasible.
T Street Annual Use 400,000	New At-Grade		Currently, joggers and walkers using the informal trail cross at-grade at several locations near the T-Street restrooms. Also, users cross at-grade at the Boca del Canon access point. The project will provide an at-grade crossing with a Number 9" signal that will serve as both an access for Boca del Cannon and for the trail alignment that crosses back over the railroad tracks.	Because this access point is one where the entire trail crosses the railroad tracks, an underpass is not feasible. Topography and the ramping necessary to meet ADA requirements, and environmental considerations make this option infeasible.
Lost Winds Annual Use 10,000	New At-Grade		This area currently gets moderate use. Users access the beach from a stairway and path that lead down from the coastal bluff. They then cross at-grade at a variety of locations. There is excellent line of sight at this location. An improved at-grade crossing is proposed for this location that will channel people to one safe crossing location.	An undercrossing is not an option, because the adjacent beach grade is similar on both sides of the tracks which would impede the ability to drain water.
Riviera Annual Use 39,000	Improved Undercrossing	Improved Undercrossing	An at-grade crossing is not considered an option at this location because there is already an established undercrossing.	Improve the existing undercrossing by diverting low-flow runoff into the sewer and building an additional drainage pipe under the tracks to divert water during high flow events is an option that may be explored by the City as part of a larger Capital Improvement Program. This would improve access and partially correct stormdrain problems. Continued periodic closure is expected due to tide and stormdrain debris. A lagoon currently exists on the ocean side of the tracks most of the year due to the

TABLE 3
PROPOSED CROSSINGS
SAN CLEMENTE RAILROAD CORRIDOR PEDESTRIAN BEACH TRAIL

Crossing Location	Proposed Crossing	Alternative Crossing	Rationale: At-Grade	Rationale: Undercrossing
				elevated beach, and sand level trapping water at the outfall point. Improvements to direct pedestrians around the lagoon are proposed and signage will be included to direct people to the Montalvo underpass during flooded conditions.
Montalvo Annual Use 15,000	Improved Undercrossing		An at-grade crossing is not considered an option at this location because there is already an established undercrossing.	An existing concrete bridge is located in this area. The project proposes to build a pedestrian bridge spanning the channel with an improved access path down to the channel and under the railroad bridge. This underpass will serve as an alternative access point if the Riviera access becomes flooded.
Calafia Annual Use 80,000	Improved At-Grade	New Undercrossing	Currently, a licensed ANumber 8" crossing exists with no access solution through the riprap. The existing at-grade will be improved to provide appropriate beach access with concrete steps through the structurally replaced riprap.	Development of this new undercrossing is contingent upon funding availability.

Source: Borthwick, Guy, Bettenhausen, April 2002.

D. Landscaping

Proposed landscaping along the trail alignment is considered an important component of the project. Several areas along the coastal trail will include native landscaping and landscaping buffer areas. The portion of the trail proposed to be planted with native plants is a restoration project. The City proposes to replant native vegetation in barren areas along the trail that may have been occupied by native plants at some point in the past. **Figures 1 through 4** depict the portions of the trail that are proposed for the native landscape restoration and/or buffer planting. Generally, landscaping will occur in the vicinity of at-grade crossings or undercrossings. The landscaping will include plants and scrubs that are relatively small in scale. No large trees will be planted along the trail or near crossings. Proposed native landscaping includes: the Mexican fan palm; coastal bluff scrub; and vines on some barriers to provide visual accent. Appendix B contains the Plant List for the proposed project.

At-Grade Crossing Signal Devices

Two types of signal devices (ANumber 8" and ANumber 9") are proposed by the City for the at-grade crossings. When activated, both types of signals warn pedestrians near the crossing with flashing lights and bells that a train is approaching. The Number 9 signal device also has an arm that lowers across the railroad crossing to warn pedestrian of the approaching train. The project proposes to use the Number 8 railroad crossing signal device at most new at-grade railroad crossings to alert trail

users intending to cross the tracks that a train is approaching. Where the trail crosses the railroad tracks at Corto Lane and T Street Number 9 signals are proposed. The Number 8 at-grade crossing signal device is activated when a train moves over a sensor placed in the railroad track a certain distance from the crossing. When the sensor is activated, it determines the speed of the train and is programmed to activate the crossing signal (flashing lights and bells) for a specified amount of time until the train passes through the crossing. In addition to the crossing signal device, the train engineer blows the train's horn to notify all people in the vicinity of the train tracks and crossing that the train is approaching. The crossing signal device operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is activated whenever a train passes over a sensor. Improvements at the under crossings and the at grade crossings are subject to PUC review and approval.

Disabled Accessibility

For purposes of this project, the California Department of Parks and Recreation Standards that address trails have guided project design. These standards were used in lieu of Title 24 and Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (LAPM), because the California Department of Parks and Recreation Standards are more applicable to the unpaved nature of the proposed trail. In addition, the California Department of Parks and Recreation Standards provide a higher standard for resting areas on linear runs than does Title 24. The proposed north/south trail corridor will be designed to provide disabled access in accordance with the California Department of Parks and Recreation standards for its entire length and for the elevated walkway around Mariposa Point, rail crossings at Corto Lane and T-Street, underpass at Calafia (if funding becomes available) and bridge structures from North Beach to Calafia. The City has existing disabled parking at North Beach, Linda Lane, Pier Bowl and Calafia Park. Disabled access from each of these locations to the trail shall be maintained. Existing coastal access points at Dije, El Portal, Mariposa, Lost Winds and Riviera can not provide disabled access to the trail due to existing topographic constraints due to Coastal bluffs.

Disabled access from the trail to the beach exists at North Beach and the Pier Bowl. The project shall provide additional disabled access to the beach from Linda Lane through the new Corto Lane at-grade crossing. The existing south Linda Lane rail undercrossing will be improved for disabled access. An additional disabled beach access is proposed at Calafia Park via a rail undercrossing in the future, if funding becomes available. Disabled access to the beach directly from the trail will not be available at the at-grade crossings where riprap rocks exist west of the railroad corridor. Stairs will be placed over the riprap to access the beach at these locations.

Construction

The proposed project may be developed in separate phases (depending on if all at-grade crossings or some undercrossings are approved); however, for environmental review purposes, construction of the project is analyzed as one element. The City does not have funding for all proposed improvements at this time. Proposed improvements will be prioritized by the City for phasing and final design based on regulatory approvals and funding availability. Some proposed improvements may not be constructed due to lack of regulatory permits and/or funding.

Construction will occur within the OCTA Railroad right-of-way, generally from the toe of the coastal bluff to the western edge of the rip rap revetment. Construction activities will occur on the beach side of the trail corridor in order to adjust existing rip rap for construction of stairways associated with the at-grade crossings. Throughout the construction process, beach access will be maintained. Due to the linear nature of this project and the limited amount of construction required to improve the trail area, beach access will be relatively easy to maintain. Construction of all components of the proposed trail project will require essentially the same type of construction equipment. Most of the construction equipment will have to be brought to the construction site on flat bed trucks. The major types of construction equipment required for the project include: one crane, one truck, one backhoe, one wheeled loader, and one bulldozer. In addition, a concrete pump may be needed for the at-grade crossings and some undercrossings. A few other pieces of construction equipment may also be required for construction of the Mariposa elevated boardwalk and bridges at Trafalgar, Riviera, and Montalvo.

Operations

Since the proposed trail will be built on publically owned land, the trail will operate from dawn to dusk; however, the City Park and Recreation Department estimates that significant use of the trail will occur during core day-light hours of the summer months. In addition to Caltrans standard signs, additional signs, which direct users to access points, parks, transit stations, and other points of interest will be posted. Temporary signs may also be appropriate to caution users of hazardous conditions, such as during high tide episodes when water may block the undercrossings or when there may be sand or water on the trail.

Maintenance of the trail and undercrossings will be the responsibility of the City of San Clemente Parks and Recreation Department. Typically the Parks and Recreation Department would contract with a private maintenance company to maintain the trail. At-grade crossings will be maintained by the OCTA. It's likely that the City will police the trail through it's existing contract with the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the OCTA Sheriff's will continue to police the railroad tracks for illegal crossings and other illegal activities.

Objectives

The following statements represent project objectives of the City of San Clemente. The purpose of the proposed coastal trail is to increase safe beach access locations through development of a trail system from North Beach to Calafia Park. The following principals are considered to be the objectives of the project:

- \$ Improve safety associated with crossing the railroad tracks at designated beach access points as found in the City's Certified Coastal Land Use Plan.
- \$ Improve safety associated with pedestrians traveling parallel to the railroad tracks within the railroad right of way.
- \$ Create a coastal trail that is natural in character and does not encroach on to the beach or tidelands.
- \$ Enhance pedestrian beach access within the City of San Clemente.

Figure 2
Coastal Trail
Sheet 1 of 4

Figure 3
Coastal Trail
Sheet 2 of 4

Figure 4
Coastal Trail
Sheet 3 of 4

Figure 5
Coastal Trail
Sheet 4 of 4

Figure 5a
Typical Rail Fence

Figure 6
Typical Trail Section
Marine Safety Headquarters

Figure 7
Typical Trail Section
Proposed Mariposa Elevated Boardwalk

Figure 8
Visual Simulation
Proposed Mariposa Elevated Boardwalk

Figure 9
Public Access Points
Currently in Use and Proposed Crossings

Figure 10
Dije Court
New At-Grade Crossing

Figure 11
Dije Court
New At-Grade Crossing
Visual Simulation

Figure 12
Dije Court
New Undercrossing Alternative

Figure 13
El Portal
New At-Grade Crossing
and Improved Undercrossing

Figure 14
Mariposa
New Undercrossing

Figure 15
North Linda Land
Improved Undercrossing

Figure 16
South Linda Lane
New At-Grade Crossing

Figure 17
South Linda Lane
New Undercrossing Alternative

Figure 18
Corto Lane
Improved At-Grade Crossing

Figure 19
T Street
New At-Grade Crossing

Figure 20
Lost Winds
New At-Grade Crossing

Figure 21
Riviera
Improved Undercrossing

Figure 22
Montalvo
Improved Undercrossing

Figure 23
Trafalgar Bridge

Figure 24
Calafia North Parking
New Undercrossing

Figure 25
Calafia South Parking
Improved At-Grade Crossing

3.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

A coastal trail along the railroad has been a goal of the City of San Clemente for many years. However, it wasn't until the sale of the railroad by AT&SF to Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) that there was indication that the railroad supported a formal trail. The City's current adopted General Plan and the Pier Bowl Specific Plan contains policies for trail improvements. However, the project is primarily based on the mission statement and project goals identified in the Railroad Corridor Safety and Education Panel (RCSEP) safety report (see Section 1.0-Introduction).

Background

The trail corridor consists of the OCTA railroad right-of-way separated by the coastal bluffs on the east and the ocean on the west. For over 75 years, the corridor has served as a transportation link serving local residents and visitors who traverse along the railroad right-of-way to connect to beaches, residences, the transit station and commercial businesses.

In 1928, the pier was constructed and the area was actively used for sport fishing. Since the 1940's, San Clemente's beaches have been an ideal location for avid surfers, leading to the formation of surfing organizations including the Surfrider Foundation. Both national and regional surfing events are held on the beach at the Pier annually. The City also conducts several community events near the Pier Bowl, including the Fourth of July fireworks and the Ocean Festival.

Currently, most sections of the informal trail are not maintained nor officially recognized by the City, OCTA, or any other agency (Note: The service road between the Pier and T Street is officially recognized by OCTA and maintained by the City). Due to limited space between the tracks and the coastal bluffs, poor drainage and gravel (ballast) placed along the right-of-way by OCTA maintenance crews, trail users have to cross or go onto the tracks, creating an uneven, sometimes discontinuous and dangerous trail. The Coastal Element recognizes 18 shoreline access points, 13 of which are located along the proposed trail corridor. The following policies from *Section 303-Shoreline Access Goals and Policies* of the Coastal Element support the proposed project; IX.1, IX.2, IX.3, IX.4, IX.6, IX.7, IX.9, and IX.11. The General Plan Parks and Recreation Element also support the goals of the proposed project. Specifically, Objective J.8.10 ADevelop a comprehensive network of improved beach access facilities which will ultimately provide safe access to all City owned beaches,@ identifies the City's desire to provide sufficient safe beach access.

Built Environment

Principal links from Interstate 5 to the beach are provided at Avenida Pico, Avenida Palazada, and Avenida Presidio. The project area is bordered on the west by the beach and on the east by residential and commercial uses. The residences, with a few exceptions are located above the tracks on top of the bluffs. The commercial uses are primarily located across Avenida Victoria and at North Beach. The OCTA railroad right-of-way bisects the corridor. A rock revetment protects the railroad

tracks from the erosional forces of the tides and surf. There are four primary parking locations serving San Clemente beaches. These parking lots are situated at North Beach Metrolink station, Linda Lane Park, the San Clemente Municipal Pier, and Calafia Park. Within the project area there are 13 pedestrian public beach access points from residential and commercial areas, which bring residents and visitors to the beach. These are located at North Beach, Dije, El Portal, Mariposa, Linda Lane, Corto Lane, the Municipal Pier, T Street, Boca Del Canon, Lost Winds, Riviera, Montalvo, and Calafia. There are three existing licensed pedestrian at-grade crossings, located at North Beach, the Municipal Pier, and Calafia State Park. Corto Lane is a licensed private at-grade crossing. Additionally, there is a pedestrian overcrossing at T-Street, an undercrossing at the Municipal Pier, and Riviera. Three drainage structures at El Portal, Linda Lane, and Montalvo provide access, during low tide, under the rail.

The OCTA right of way is currently used by pedestrians and bicyclists. As stated previously in Section 1.0, a substantial number of informal (non-licensed) trails have been created at accessible points along the coastal bluffs and adjacent to the railroad tracks. In addition to the existing four licensed access points and nine access points designated as public beach access points in the City's Coastal Element, there are countless numbers of informal trails that people use to access the beach. There is also a well established trail that parallels the tracks that is used by pedestrians, people walking their dogs, joggers, and mountain bikes. These informal trails contain uneven surfaces and are not improved to ADA standards. They allow for illegal crossing of the tracks at any location, and poor drainage conditions at many locations essentially force pedestrians and bicyclists onto the tracks in an effort to avoid large puddles and areas of thick mud. Currently, the City experiences over 2.3 million beach visitors annually, all of which use the OCTA right of way to get to the beaches, transit stations, and local parks. This number is expected to increase as the population of south Orange County continues to grow.

Currently, bicyclists can utilize existing roads to connect from the residential areas to the beach. However, the roads have steep grades and do not provide direct access to the transit stations or the beaches. The proposed coastal trail will improve public access to transit stations, twelve beaches and local parks. The coastal trail will also be an integral segment of a regional trail linking Dana Point to Camp Pendleton and to the proposed Coastal Rail Trail from Oceanside to San Diego.

Safety Benefits

Currently, there is an average of thirty two passenger trains and eight freight trains per day using the OCTA railway. The passenger trains travel at approximately 40 MPH and the freight trains travel at a slower rate through the project area. The corridor is used by tourists and local residents as a means of reaching the beach and as a transportation conduit between the northern and central parts of the City.

Despite the fact that the railroad right-of-way is designated as off-limits to the public except at designated at-grade crossing points (North Beach, Pier, and Calafia State Park), the right-of-way is used by the public for recreational purposes and crossing the railroad tracks is the only way for the public to access the beach as described in the preceding section. For most residents and visitors, the railroad is a part of the beach landscape. The OCTA does not actively enforce the "No Trespassing"

regulations. There are several factors that make it infeasible for the OCTA to actively enforce the “No Trespassing” regulations. These include the fact that the OCTA right-of-way is generally not accessible for most street vehicles, thereby, reducing OCTA to effectively patrol the area in a vehicle.

Also, due to the high number of pedestrians and bicyclists along the entire length of the corridor, it is difficult for OCTA to enforce no trespassing. Finally, the manner in which the area surrounding the OCTA has developed (historic land use patterns) has made fencing the length of the corridor problematic and has also contributed to enforcement problems. Information derived from OCTA stated that a total of five fatalities were recorded between 1993 and the spring of 1995 along the tracks in San Clemente.¹ Additional information obtained from the Federal Railroad Authority (FRA) webpage states that no accidents have occurred recently along portions of the railroad line that are adjacent to the proposed coastal trail. Upon project implementation, the safety issues related to crossing the railroad tracks are expected to be reduced, since the new crossings will be constructed, as part of the proposed project, to current FRA standards. These standards are designed to minimize potential safety hazards and OCTA and the CPUC will review the final design of the trail, to ensure all safety precautions have been included.

Except during peak periods and special events, the proposed trail will generally draw local residents and people who are already using the corridor or the beach. The trail will help to manage and channel existing pedestrian movements that are scattered along (and sometimes on) the track into 13 formal crossing locations (existing licensed and project related crossings) within the proposed trail limits. The existing and proposed formal crossings will provide adequate warning of on-coming trains. Undercrossings will be developed if funding is available and the physical constraints of a particular area allow undercrossings. In order to accomplish this goal, the railroad would encourage a safe, designated bicycle pedestrian route along the right-of-way.

Recreational Benefits

The project will greatly expand the range of recreational activities at the beach, including, walking, jogging, use of strollers, wheelchairs, some bicycling (mountain bikes), and other activities. The crossing of the railroad tracks is the only way for approximately 2.3 million beach visitors to get to City and State owned beaches along the 2.7 miles of the corridor. The project will also enhance beach accessibility by facilitating lateral movements from public access points. Areas previously inaccessible by wheelchairs will be made accessible through implementation of the project.

The project is expected to enhance connectivity between the Pier and North Beach areas, thereby improving access to special events such as the Ocean Festival, the Pier Chowder Cook-Off, the 4th of July celebration, and numerous surfing competitions. The special events are anticipated to attract and accommodate additional users to the trail project.

Health Benefits

The project is expected to provide residents and visitors to San Clemente an enhanced opportunity for physical activity including walking, jogging, and bicycling. These activities are identified in the U.S. National Walking and Bicycling Study (FHWA, 1994, Case Study #14, "Benefits of Bicycling and Walking to Health") as having some of the greatest direct benefits to health of all possible activities,

with 73% of all U.S. adults walking for exercise, 62% walking at least several times per week, and 54% walking one or more miles per trip.

Walking, bicycling, and other activities have a direct benefit to health in the form of decreased incidence of heart and lung disease, and a significant impact on life expectancy. These activities also produce benefits in the form of reduced cardio-vascular problems, arthritis, depression, and resistance to and rehabilitation of injuries. The direct benefit to the community of San Clemente is in the form of increased worker productivity, decreased medical costs, and increased life spans.

NOTE

1. Pat Lewis, Orange County Transportation Authority

4.0 INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

1. **Project Title:** San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail
2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:** City of San Clemente
910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100
San Clemente, CA 92673
3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:** Jim Pechous (949) 361-6100
4. **Project Location:** Located within the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)
railroad right-of-way from North Beach south to Calafia State Beach.
5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:** City of San Clemente
910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100
San Clemente, California 92673
6. **General Plan Designation:** Open Space 1
7. **Zoning:** Open Space (OS1), Pier Bowl Specific Plan and S1, North Beach Study Area
8. **Description of the Project:** (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary)

The trail will be constructed generally five feet wide and may have a shoulder on one or both sides achieving a total width of 10 feet to allow for periodic railroad and City maintenance. The edge of the trail will be located a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the centerline of the tracks. Where improvements are required, the trail will be constructed of natural materials (e.g., soil, decomposed granite, or wood). A small portion of the trail alignment is in good condition and will not be altered from its existing condition. The proposed trail improvements include: minor re-grading of the existing trail with drainage improvements, minor re-grading of the trail with minor improvements, proposed elevated boardwalk section of the trail (between El Portal and Mariposa, the elevated boardwalk is proposed for safety considerations as the trail in this particular area curves around a point and gets very close to the railroad track), and proposed pedestrian bridges (at four locations at various points along the trail). Please refer to *Section 2.0-Project Description* of this document for a detailed project description.

9. **Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:** (Briefly describe the project's surroundings)

The project area is bordered by the beach and the Pacific Ocean to the west and on the east by commercial and residential uses. Generally, the residential uses are located on the bluffs above the railroad. The commercial uses are located at the North Beach transit station and at/on the pier.

10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required:** (e.g. permits, financing approval, or participation agreement).

Federal Highway Administration

California Coastal Commission

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Funding Approval

Land Use Approval

Funding Approval

California Public Utilities Commission
Orange County Transportation Authority

Trail and Rail Crossing Approval
Easement Approval

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The following Initial Study indicates that the project may result in potential environmental impacts in the following marked categories:

Aesthetics		Agricultural Resources		Air Quality	
Biological Resources	X	Cultural Resources		Geology/Soils	
Hazards/Hazardous Materials	X	Hydrology/Water Quality		Land Use/Planning	
Mineral Resources		Noise		Population/Housing	
Public Services		Recreation		Transportation/Traffic	
Utilities & Service Systems		Mandatory Findings of Significance			

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION has been prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect: (a) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (b) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on the attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

For

Initial Study: San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e. g. the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g. the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section 17, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analysis may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063 (c) (3) (D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
 - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less Than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g. general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources. A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and

Initial Study: San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail

- b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

A. INITIAL STUDY

IMPACT CATEGORY	Sources*	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant w/Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
*See Source References at the end of this Checklist.					

1. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?					X
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?					X
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?					X

2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES (In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.) Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?					X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?					X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?					X

3. AIR QUALITY – (Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.) Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?					X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?					X
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?					X

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IMPACT CATEGORY	Sources*	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant w/Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
*See Source References at the end of this Checklist.					
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?					X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?					X

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X		
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X		
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				X	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?					X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?					X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				X	

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?					X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?					X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X	
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?					X

Initial Study: San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail

IMPACT CATEGORY	Sources*	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant w/Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
*See Source References at the end of this Checklist.					

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:					
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Div. of Mines and Geology Special Pub. 42.)					X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X	
iv) Landslides?				X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				X	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?					X
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?					X

7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -- Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?					X
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?					X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?					X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?			X		

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IMPACT CATEGORY	Sources*	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant w/Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
*See Source References at the end of this Checklist.					
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?					X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?					X
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?					X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?					X
i) Would the project result in the creation of any new adverse safety hazards or expose people to any new potential safety hazards?				X	

8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?					X
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?					X
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?					X
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?					X
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?					X
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?					X
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?					X

Initial Study: San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail

IMPACT CATEGORY	Sources*	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant w/Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
*See Source References at the end of this Checklist.					
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?					X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?					X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?					X

9. LAND USE AND PLANNING -- Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?					X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?					X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?					X

10. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?					X
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?					X

11. NOISE -- Would the project result in:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				X	
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?					X
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X	
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				X	
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?					X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?					X

Initial Study: San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail

IMPACT CATEGORY	Sources*	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant w/Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
*See Source References at the end of this Checklist.					
12. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- Would the project:					
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?					X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?					X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?					X

13. PUBLIC SERVICES: Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?				X	
Police protection?				X	
Schools?					X
Parks?				X	
Other public facilities?				X	

14. RECREATION:

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X	
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?					X
c) Will the proposed project adversely impact surfing conditions?					X

15. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -- Would the project:

a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?					X
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Initial Study: San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail

IMPACT CATEGORY	Sources*	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant w/Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
*See Source References at the end of this Checklist.					
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?					X
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?					X
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?					X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X	
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?				X	
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?					X

16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS -- Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?					X
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?					X
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X	
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?					X
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?					X
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?					X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?					X

Initial Study: San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail**17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?					X
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?					X
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?					X

PREVIOUS ANALYSIS:

Per CEQA Guidelines Sections 15063 (*Initial Study*), 15152 (*Tiering*), 15153 (*Use of an EIR from an Earlier Project*), and 15168 (*Program EIR*), previous analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, one or more effects have been adequately analyzed in a previous EIR or Negative Declaration. In this case, the following previous environmental impact reports address impacts of the current project:

Therefore, per CEQA and case law, the following items apply:

- a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify earlier analyses and state where they are available for review.
- b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
- c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions of the project.

Initial Study: San Clemente Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail

SOURCE REFERENCES:

1.	See Section 11, References
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Note: The preceding source documents are available for public review at the City of San Clemente Planning Division, 910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100, San Clemente, California.	

B. EXPLANATIONS OF CHECKLIST RESPONSES:

See Section 5.0, Discussion of Environmental Evaluation.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

5.1 Aesthetics

Existing Conditions

Visual Resource policies identified in the Coastal Element of the City of San Clemente General Plan provide for maintaining the visual character and aesthetic resources of the City through the preservation of open space areas, coastal bluffs and canyons, and public view corridors. The City's coastline consists of five miles of uninterrupted beach, backed in most areas by nearly vertical coastal bluffs. Due to these sharply contrasting features and the open expanse of the Pacific Ocean, the City identified this area as a visual resource zone: The Coastal Zone.

Project Impacts

- a. *Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*

Development of the trail will not significantly change the disturbed (due to railroad construction and maintenance), mostly unimproved character of the railroad corridor. Some grading for the trail will be required, as well as the installation of barriers, at-grade crossings and undercrossings. However, the trail will not be paved (except where crossings occur), and only rustic looking materials that are compatible with topography and the landscape of the area will be used. The proposed project has been designed through an active public participation program. In fact, by introducing native plants and other rustic design features to the railroad corridor, the aesthetics of the area will be enhanced. A Visual Impact Study (Borthwick-Guy-Bettenhausen, Inc., February 2003) has been prepared to address four locations of the project that have the potential to impact views from existing residential areas and the beach. These areas are where the elevated boardwalk and three pedestrian bridges will be constructed. The Visual Impact Study is provided in Appendix F of the Draft Initial Study/MND. The visual impact analysis indicates that the proposed structures will not significantly impact public or private views. The project will not result in a significant impact to a scenic vista from atop the coastal bluff, along the proposed trail alignment or from passing trains. This issue is considered less than significant.

- b. *Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*

The proposed coastal trail is not located within a state scenic highway; therefore, the proposed project will not result in a significant impact to this issue.

- c. *Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?*

The proposed project will not significantly change the existing visual character of the proposed trail corridor or substantially degrade the existing visual character as the area has been significantly disturbed by railroad construction and ongoing railroad maintenance. The project proposes the use of natural/rustic looking materials such as decomposed granitic, dirt, and wood. In several locations at North Beach, Dije, El Portal, Linda Lane, near the T Street restrooms, and at Riviera, native landscaping restoration is proposed in areas devoid of vegetation. The use of the trail will enhance the view of the beach and the horizon for trail users. The proposed project will not result in a significant impact to aesthetics.

- d. *Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

The proposed trail will not use any materials that would create a new source of light or glare. The trail surface will be comprised of decomposed granitic, dirt, and wood surfaces. In addition, the project does not propose any lighting for the trail as the trail will be open from dawn to dusk. No significant impact to this issue is anticipated.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant aesthetics impacts have been identified.

5.2 Agriculture Resources

Project Impacts

- a. *Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?*

No portion of the proposed trail corridor is located on land that is identified as farmland by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. The proposed project is located on a narrow strip of land adjacent to the OCTA railroad tracks and the Pacific Ocean. The proposed project will not result in a significant agricultural resources impact.

- b. *Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?*

The proposed trail alignment is located in three zoning districts: 1) Open Space; 2) Pier Bowl Specific Plan and S1; and 3) North Beach Study Area. None of these zoning types permits agriculture. The proposed project will not result in a significant agricultural resources impact.

- c. *Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?*

The proposed project will not create other changes in the environment that would result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. The proposed project will not result in a significant agricultural resources impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant agriculture resources impacts have been identified.

5.3 Air Quality

Existing Conditions

The City of San Clemente is located in the southernmost portion of the South Coast Air Basin. The South Coast Air Basin is a 6,600 square mile basin encompassing all of Orange County, most of Los Angeles and Riverside Counties, and the western portion of San Bernardino County.

The climate of the South Coast Air Basin is generally dominated by mild weather with cool sea breezes but can experience periods of hot weather, winter storms, and strong Santa Ana winds. Precipitation in San Clemente is approximately 12.3 inches per year based on the information from the weather station located 10 miles to the north at Laguna Beach. Due to the topography and the climate of Southern California, the area has a high air pollution potential. The Hawaiian subtropical high pressure zone of warm and dry descending air restricts the movement of cooler air near the surface and frequently results in the formation of temperature inversions.

Concern over the poor air quality in Southern California is based on the significant health and economic impacts of air pollution. State and Federal agencies have established ambient air quality standards for specific air pollutants. These standards have resulted in the development of Regional Mobility Plans (RMP). The RMP for the Southern California Region attempts to reduce the significant transportation impacts on regional air quality. The region's air quality is largely dependent upon the number of vehicle trips and their mileage. The RMP estimates that vehicle miles traveled in the region will increase 68% and the average length in miles will increase 19.6%

Vehicular emissions account for approximately 99% of all emissions in San Clemente. Managing and reducing the demand for vehicular transportation is critical in maintaining and improving air quality.

Non-motorized activities such as walking and bicycling do not consume petroleum and are non-polluting modes of transportation. Walking and bicycling generally replace short distance commuting, which are the most polluting of vehicle trips. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments recognize that the use of bicycling and walking as transportation can be effective ways to reduce carbon monoxide emissions from mobile sources (cars, trucks, buses, etc.). In the United States in 1991, it has been estimated "that bicycling and walking were equivalent to between 7.6 and 28.1 billion motor vehicle miles, saving 370 to 1,340 million gallons of gasoline and 4.4 to 16.3 million metric tons of exhaust emission air pollution. Additional estimates of the air pollution cost savings of

walking or bicycling rather than driving a car is estimated at \$0.40 per 2.5 mile urban commute trip and \$0.24 for all other urban trips.

Project Impacts

- a. *Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?*

The proposed project is development of a coastal trail in the City of San Clemente. The proposed trail will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). Development of the coastal trail is consistent with goals and policies of the AQMP by encouraging non-vehicular activity, and should actually reduce the number of vehicle trips in the area. The proposed project will not result in a significant air quality impact.

- b. *Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?*

Long term project impacts will have a positive effect on air quality as the project will encourage alternate forms of transportation.

Short-term construction activities will result in air emissions generated by construction equipment and will add small quantities into the atmosphere. Construction-related emissions would be associated with activities including minor grading, rock removal, site preparation and forming, concrete pouring (at-grade crossings, undercrossings, and the elevated boardwalk pillars), and barrier construction. In addition to equipment exhaust, project-related construction would generate dust from activities such as grading and vehicle/equipment use. Construction of the proposed trail is not an equipment-intensive operation and requires only one crane, one truck, one backhoe, one wheeled loader, one bulldozer, and one concrete pump. This equipment would not be operating simultaneously, and in most cases only one or two pieces of equipment would be in use at any one time. The operation of this equipment will not generate large quantities of emissions and the emissions will cease at the end of construction. As identified in **Table 4**, the pollutant emissions associated with construction of the proposed trail will not exceed the South Coast Air Basin's construction pollutant thresholds.

**TABLE 4
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS
(POUNDS PER DAY)**

Pollutant	Total Emissions	Threshold	Exceeds Threshold
CO	0.0	550	No
NO _x	62.43	100	No
PM ₁₀	10.90	150	No
ROG	4.90	75	No

CO = carbon monoxide

NO_x = oxides of nitrogenPM₁₀ = particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter

ROG = reactive organic compounds

Source: Cotton/Bridges/Associates, February 2002.

General dust generation associated with project construction activities would be limited to areas within approximately 20-30 feet and are influenced by disturbance intensity, soil characteristics, and wind parameters. The effect is considered minimal since distance and height separate the residential areas from the project site. The proposed project will not result in a significant air quality impact.

- c. Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?*

The proposed project would not result in an increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Basin is in non-attainment because the project will not create additional vehicle trips nor does it require a significant amount of construction over a long-period of time. The proposed project will not result in a significant air quality impact.

- d. Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

The project will not create additional vehicle trips nor does it require a significant amount of construction over a long-period of time. The residential areas near the trail alignment will not be significantly impacted by pollutant concentrations. The proposed project will not result in a significant air quality impact.

- e. Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?*

The project will not create additional vehicle trips nor does it propose to use construction techniques or materials that would generate objectionable odors. Residents near the trail alignment and future trail users will not be significantly affected by odor during construction. The proposed project will not result in a significant air quality impact.

Mitigation Measures

There are long term benefits resulting from project implementation due to the increase of nonmotorized alternative transportation uses. In addition, the impacts to air quality resulting from construction activities are short-term in nature and will not significantly impact air quality in the Basin. The proposed project will not result in a significant air quality impact.

5.4 Biological Resources

A survey of the biological resources of the rail corridor was conducted by Merkel & Associates (Biological Constraints Analysis San Clemente Rail , Trail, Merkel & Associates, Inc., January 31, 2002) to: (1) search the proposed study area for sensitive biological resources; (2) ascertain if construction of the proposed trail would have significant impacts on existing biological resources; and (3) develop mitigation measures (as appropriate) to avoid, and/or reduce potential impacts to these resources. A jurisdictional wetland delineation (Jurisdictional Wetland Delineation for the San Clemente Rail Trail Project, Merkel & Associates, Inc. September 17, 2002) was also performed for the project. A summary of these reports is included in this document. Both reports are provided in Appendix C of this Draft Initial Study/MND.

A field survey was conducted over the entire length of the project study area. Marine biology was not surveyed, since the proposed project is a coastal trail and does not propose to encroach into tidal areas. The field survey results indicate that the proposed study area has been highly disturbed. The area on both sides of the railroad tracks was significantly impacted during construction of the railroad and continues to be impacted by current railroad improvements and maintenance operations. The ocean side of the railroad tracks consists primarily of beach sand that has been impacted by high tides and mechanical grooming. Along most of the study area, large rocks have been imported and placed as a protective barrier between the railroad tracks and the ocean. The area between the railroad tracks and the bluff contains underground sewers, utilities, storm drains, concrete gutters, and trenches the construction and maintenance of which has resulted in general disturbance of the area.

Sensitive Biological Resources

Vegetation

Several sensitive vegetation types are present along the general trail corridor. Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub is a *Athreatened* natural community and patches occur in various locations along the sea bluffs. Only 0.11 acre of bluff scrub will be impacted by the trail alignment.

Plants

Three plant species of varying sensitivity were observed along the trail. Less than ten of each species were observed in the general vicinity of the trail corridor. The three species are: California Box-Thorn; Estuary Seablite; and Woolly Seablite.

Wildlife

No sensitive animal species were identified within the trail corridor; although the Brown Pelican was observed foraging immediately off-shore. However, the Pacific Little Pocket Mouse may be present as it could survive in areas of bluff scrub upslope of the trail alignment.

On February 3, 1997, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally declared the San Diego Fairy Shrimp a federally-listed endangered species. This is in addition to the previously listed Riverside fairy shrimp and the vernal pool fairy shrimp, which also occurs in Southern California. According to the USFWS, virtually any depression that is seasonally filled with water is considered potential habitat for one of the listed species of fairy shrimp unless proven otherwise.

During the course of the biological field surveys, vernal basins were situated within low-lying areas of the railroad right-of-way, generally immediately downslope of the rock ballast on the eastern side of the tracks. At the time of the surveys these basins were concentrated in the northern half of the trail area, were ephemeral, and appeared to be regularly impacted by vehicular equipment that uses the narrow unvegetated right-of-way parallel to the tracks to access the railroad line for repairs. These basins were not likely created by natural circumstances, but rather are associated with grading and on-going maintenance of the railroad tracks. Water ponds here because this extremely low-lying topography near the beach does not facilitate ready drainage following episodes of rainfall. The Lindahl's Fairy Shrimp lives in some of these vernal basins, but no sensitive vernal pool species were observed. Lindahl's Fairy Shrimp is not a sensitive species. The possibility exists that the federally endangered San Diego Fairy Shrimp is also present in these basins; however, this species was not observed during a site visit by state permitted fairy shrimp biologist Steve Rink. Not all basins could be adequately checked for sensitive fairy shrimp because prior to the site visit, most of the existing pools were altered by heavy construction vehicles. Due to the potential for the San Diego Fairy Shrimp in these vernal basins, the proposed trail alignment has been designed to avoid the vernal basins.

Wetland Delineation Results

Merkel & Associates, Inc. conducted a jurisdictional wetland delineation along the San Clemente Rail Trail route. The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (ACOE) Wetland Delineation Manual (ACOE 1987). Two isolated wetland microhabitats were found within the study area that included 832 ft (0.02 acre) of Emergent Wetland (Holland 52440). Neither area is proposed to be impacted. Approximately 275 ft of Jurisdictional Non-wetland Water of the U.S. are proposed to be spanned by a footbridge; the channel substrate here already consists of concrete and rock and no impacts to the channel bottom are expected. Approximately 290 square feet of additional Non-wetland Waters of the U.S. are spanned by existing culvert/bridged crossings of seasonal drainages, and they will remain as part of the final trail design. No direct impacts are proposed in the areas where any wetlands/waterways were found.

Project Impacts

- a. *Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

In general, in areas along the trail alignment where a sensitive habitat or the potential for a sensitive habitat is known to occur, the trail was designed to avoid these sensitive areas.

The three sensitive plant species (California Box-Thorn; Estuary Seablite; and Woolly Seablite) identified near the trail alignment are not state or federally listed as candidate, sensitive, or special status species; therefore, project impacts would be considered less than significant. The *Biological Constraints Analysis* recommends these plant species be avoided during construction and on a permanent basis. To achieve this, the report recommends these species be flagged prior to and during trail construction; and eventually include some permanent split-rail type wood fencing downslope of their locations to deter future habitat degradation by walkers and pets.

There is a potential the Pacific Little Pocket Mouse (federally listed as endangered) may occupy sandy locations near the trail alignment or the bluff scrub upslope of the trail alignment. However, these areas are located outside of the trail alignment. The construction and operation phases of the project will not directly impact habitat of the Pacific Little Pocket Mouse. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

The Lindahl's Fairy Shrimp was identified in the vernal pools; however, the Lindahl's Fairy Shrimp is not a sensitive species. Impacts to the Lindahl's Fairy Shrimp are not considered significant impacts. Due to the disturbed conditions of the vernal pools during the biologist's site visit, a determination as to the presence of the San Diego Fairy Shrimp in these vernal pools could not be made. If any population of the San Diego Fairy Shrimp is located in the vernal pools that would be impacted by the trail alignment, the impact to the San Diego Fairy Shrimp would be considered significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BR1 will reduce this potential impact to a level less than significant.

- b. *Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

In general, in areas along the trail alignment where a sensitive habitat or the potential for a sensitive habitat is known to occur, the trail was designed to avoid these sensitive areas. However, approximately 0.11 acre of Southern California Bluff Scrub will be impacted by the proposed trail alignment. This impact is considered a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BR2 will reduce this impact to a level less than significant.

- c. *Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal*

pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

In areas where wetlands have been identified and are known to occur, the trail alignment has been realigned to avoid these sensitive areas.

No permanent wetland impacts are anticipated. The Montalvo bridge will have a 100 foot span that reaches across the drainage/wetland and the engineers have determined that the bridge will not require the installation of a caisson in the drainage/wetland area. This issue is considered less than significant.

- d. Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

The project will not significantly impact wildlife corridors. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- e. Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*

The proposed multi-use trail will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protection biological resources because all impacts will be mitigated to a level less than significant. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- f. Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

All project impacts will be mitigated to a level less than significant; therefore, no conflict with any habitat conservation plans will occur. This issue is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

BR1. The trail has been designed to avoid impacting the vernal pools. In order to ensure that all potential and known vernal pools have been avoided during final design and construction, a certified biologist will review the final design plans and identify areas which may need to be temporarily fenced off during construction. This measure shall be complied with to the satisfaction of the City of San Clemente Planning Department.

BR2. Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub shall be replanted on-site at a ratio of 2:1 (i.e., 0.22 acre of habitat creation). Figure 2 in the *Biological Constraints Analysis* identifies locations for possible sage scrub creation and enhancement. The recommendations contained in the *Biological Constraints Analysis* for replanting bluff scrub shall be followed to the satisfaction of the City of San Clemente.

5.5 Cultural Resources (Paleontological, Archaeological and Historical)

Prehistoric Era

The proposed study area lies within an area that was occupied during the late prehistoric period by the Native American group known as the Juaneno. The Juaneno are described as having developed religious, ritualistic and social customs. The actual population of the Juaneno is unknown. It is known that approximately 1,300 Juaneno resided at Mission San Juan Capistrano in the year 1800, and that as many as 4,000 Juanenos were buried in the mission cemetery.

Historic Era

The first Europeans to make contact with Orange County were members of the 1542 expedition of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo. Cabrillo sailed along the coast, but did not explore inland. Europeans did not return to the Orange County area until 1769 when Caspar de Portola led an overland expedition from San Diego to Monterey. The first permanent settlement in Orange County came when San Juan Capistrano was selected as the site for a mission in the spring of 1775.

Shortly after the independence of Mexico in 1821, the secularization of additional mission lands in the Orange County area began. In 1846, 9,000 acres of land, including the area of San Clemente, were granted to Filipe Carrillo. This area was originally referred to as Rancho Los Desaechos. However, Carrillo failed to submit his claim to the U.S. Land Commission after the United States took possession of the area from Mexico. As a result, Rancho Los Desaechos changed hands several times. Ole Hansen eventually purchased the rancho in 1925. Later, Ole Hansen was responsible for the early development of San Clemente.

Existing Conditions

A Historic Property Survey Report (CRM Tech, January 24, 2003) was prepared for the proposed project and is provided in Appendix D of this Initial Study/MND document. The Historic Property Survey Report has been prepared in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as implemented through federal regulations developed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR 800), and with the California Environmental Quality Act. No historic-era bridges, historic districts, historic landscapes, locally designated historic sites, or properties of traditional cultural value were identified within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) of the proposed project. Also, no evidence of archaeological resources was identified within the APE.

Project Impacts

- a. *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in '15064.5?*

No historical resources have been identified within the APE of the proposed trail. The proposed project will not result in a significant impact to historical resources.

- b. *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to '15064.5?*

Both the field survey and the record research did not identify any existing archaeological resources within the proposed trail alignment. Also, the project does not require extensive grading. Therefore, it is unlikely that any unknown archaeological resources would be uncovered during construction activities. However, if buried cultural materials are encountered during construction, work in that area must be halted until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. The proposed project will not result in a significant impact to archaeological resources.

- c. *Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?*

Portions of the proposed trail alignment are underlain by the Capistrano and San Mateo geologic formations. According to *Paleontological Resources, County of San Diego*, by Thomas Demere and Stephen Walsh, Department of Paleontology, San Diego Natural History Museum, the Capistrano and San Mateo formations are considered to have a high paleontological resource sensitivity. The report states that many fossils have been discovered in the Orange County Capistrano and San Mateo formations. The fossils include sharks, rays, bony fishes, sea birds, toothed whales, baleen whales, sea cow, fur seals, and walruses. However, the project will not require only minor grading and drilling to depths of 10-15 feet in several locations; therefore, uncovering paleontological resources during construction is unlikely. This issue is considered less than significant.

- d. *Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

According to the Historic Property Survey Report, both the field survey and the record research did not identify any existing archaeological or historical resources within the proposed trail alignment nor were any signs of human remains discovered during the field survey. In addition, the project does not require extensive grading, which would have the potential to impact human remains, if remains were located within the trail alignment. The proposed project will not result in a significant impact to human remains.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant cultural resources impact has been identified.

5.6 Geology and Soils

This section is based on the *Preliminary Geotechnical Assessment, San Clemente Railroad Corridor, Pedestrian Beach Trail, San Clemente, California*, prepared by Group Delta Consultants, Inc., April 20, 2001. The full report is contained in Appendix E of this document.

Existing Conditions

The soils and rock units contained in the trail alignment are fill soils, beach deposits, alluvium and colluvium, landslide deposits, terrace deposits, the San Mateo formation, and the Capistrano formation.

Coastal Bluffs

The steepest natural slopes observed along the alignment are located south of the Montalvo trestle, and are vertical to overhanging. Recent landslides were observed between the overhead walkway and Boca del Canon and Lost Winds and Riviera. In addition, a recent small failure was observed at the Mariposa Point access. Two larger ancient landslides were identified adjacent to the trail alignment. The first slide encompasses the area east of the San Clemente Pier and the second encompasses the area near Lost Winds.

Faulting/Seismicity

The closest active fault to the project site is the Newport-Inglewood Fault system, which is located approximately 4.2 miles west of the San Clemente Pier. This fault could generate a maximum credible earthquake magnitude of 6.9. No faults were observed crossing the proposed trail alignment.

Although, one minor unnamed fault is mapped as running subparallel to the trail alignment and inland near Montalvo. Other major active faults in the area include the Coronado Bank (approximately 20 miles southwest), Palos Verde (approximately 20 miles west), Elsinore (approximately 22 miles east), and Rose Canyon (about 23 miles southwest) faults. Major regional faults include the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults.

Water

The trail alignment crosses a number of southerly- and westerly-draining channels that perennially contain flowing surface waters. Observations of drainages crossing the trail alignment do not indicate significant erosion. On the bluff side of the railroad tracks, there are many areas where low spots have been created which cause the ponding of water from the bluff seeps and runoff resulting in muddy conditions. Shortly after a storm, field observations revealed a number of localized seeps from the bluffs caused by perching horizons within the bluffs. The local groundwater table is anticipated to be relatively shallow along the base of the bluff, a few feet above sea level, and likely fluctuates with the changes in tides.

General Plan

The City's Coastal Element of the General Plan sets the following goals related to soils and geology:

- a. Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic instability, flood, or fire hazard.
- b. Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter existing landform along bluffs and cliffs.

Project Impacts

- a. *Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:*

- i) *Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Div. of Mines and Geology Special Pub. 42.)*
 - ii) *Strong seismic ground shaking?*
 - iii) *Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?*
 - iv) *Landslides?*
- i) The proposed trail alignment is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone; therefore, developing the trail along the proposed alignment will not expose people or structures to significant risk of rupture of a known earthquake fault. This issue is not considered a significant impact.
- ii) The proposed trail alignment is located within 4 miles of the Newport-Inglewood fault system, which could generate a maximum credible earthquake magnitude of 6.9 along the trail alignment. This issue is considered less than significant because the project will be designed in accordance with the seismic design provisions outlined in the comprehensive geotechnical report and as specified in the Uniform Building Code (UBC), California Amendments to the UBC, and the City's Building Code.
- iii) Liquefaction may occur in the poorly-consolidated sands in the alluvial drainage channels along the trail alignment where the pedestrian bridges are located. Pier foundations associated with the pedestrian bridges will be supported in the dense formational soils and should not be affected by liquefaction. As part of the project, prior to final design and construction of the trail, a comprehensive geotechnical evaluation including subsurface exploration and laboratory testing will be performed to address site specific geotechnical considerations. From this data, recommendations for grading/earthwork, liquefaction, fill soil, alluvium, colluvium compaction, surface and subsurface drainage, temporary and/or permanent foundations will be

implemented. The potential for liquefaction in the area of the pedestrian bridges is considered less than significant based on implementation of all applicable construction recommendations contained in the preliminary geotechnical report and of the comprehensive geotechnical evaluation.

- iv) Only minor cuts and fills to achieve a stable roadbed, improve surface drainage, and create safe pedestrian crossings over the rail line is required for project implementation. Also, pile construction, which would include drilling holes approximately 10 to 15 feet in depth, will be necessary for the construction of elevated walkways and pedestrian bridges. The use of debris fences is not proposed, with the exception of Mariposa Point. At this location there are currently the three geotechnical design options for the elevated walkway around Mariposa Point, one of which includes a debris fence. The minor amount of grading and installation of pier foundations associated with the bridges would not effect the stability of the existing landslide areas or coastal bluffs. As part of the project, recommendations contained in the geotechnical investigation will be implemented to reduce the risk associated with the potential landslide areas to the trail. This issue is considered less than significant.

b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

The proposed project requires minor grading to create the un-paved multi-use trail and drilling for installation of pier foundations. However, most of the proposed trail alignment consists of fill soils that are easily erodible and may result in sinkholes and settlement. Based on the planned implementation of the recommendations contained in the preliminary geotechnical report this issue is considered less than significant.

c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

The proposed project is located on the San Mateo and Capistrano formations. The San Mateo formation is located at the southern end of the trail alignment and is considered susceptible to erosion and bluff failure. The Capistrano formation is located along most of the trail alignment within the lower bluff and is considered very susceptible to landslides. In addition, the alluvium, colluvium, and terrace deposits are also susceptible to landslides. Please refer to question a.iii. above for a discussion regarding potential liquefaction impacts related to the pedestrian bridges. Please refer to question a. iv above for a discussion regarding potential landslides.

d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18- 1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

No expansive soils have been identified within the proposed trail alignment. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- e. *Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?*

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail and does not include any type of waste disposal system. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant geology/soils impact has been identified.

5.7 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Existing Conditions

Currently, there is an existing safety problem caused by people walking along, on, and across the active railroad tracks at the numerous informal and unprotected railroad crossings. There is generally inadequate or no access for emergency vehicles, beach maintenance vehicles, and OCTA maintenance vehicles along the length of the corridor.

One of the goals of developing a formal trail is to provide trail connections to the transit stations for commuters and recreation activities. Although, the result will be increased safety for persons using the corridor. By providing a formal multi-use trail, formal at-grade trail crossings, and undercrossings, education programs, and enforcement it is anticipated that persons will stay on the trail and not walk on or cross the tracks except at designated crossings, thus reducing the number of accidents and fatalities associated with the railroad. The trail is not designed for vehicle access; however, a minimum 10 foot clear wide corridor (as prescribed by Metrolink) will be maintained which emergency vehicles could potentially negotiate. This would likely be limited to smaller vehicles such as a lifeguard jeep.

A Phase I Initial Site Assessment (RBF Consulting, January 7, 2003) was prepared for the proposed project and is available for review at the City of San Clemente. Based on this assessment, no visible evidence to suggest the presence of a recognized environmental condition within the boundary of the trail corridor was observed. Additionally, based on a database search, no listed regulatory sites are reported within the boundaries of the trail corridor.

Project Impacts

- a. *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

The proposed project is a multi-use trail in the City of San Clemente. No hazardous materials will be transported along the trail; therefore, no significant impact shall occur.

Approximately 8 freight trains per day travel past the proposed trail alignment. There is a possibility that some of the freight trains carry hazardous materials. If a train accident were to occur along the proposed trail involving a freight train carrying hazardous materials, trail

users may be impacted by hazardous materials. However, according to Federal Railroad Authority (FRA) data, no accidents have occurred (since 1975) along the proposed trail alignment and the project will not increase the likelihood of a train accident. Therefore, this issue is not considered a significant impact.

- b. *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?*

See a above. In addition, the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) is located approximately 2.5 miles south of the trail alignment. Development of the trail may increase visitors/beach users in the area, increasing the number of people at risk to nuclear failure at SONGS. However, the City maintains emergency response procedures to protect public health in the event of a SONGS accident. The impact to public safety is not considered significant because the City maintains an aggressive emergency response plan. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- c. *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?*

The proposed project is a multi-use trail that will not emit hazardous emissions or allow transportation of hazardous materials, substances or waste. Therefore, the project will not affect any existing or proposed schools. This issue will not result in a significant impact.

- d. *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

The proposed multi-use trail alignment is located parallel and adjacent to the OCTA railroad tracks. According to the Phase I Initial Site Assessment, the following measures are recommended prior to and during the project construction phase:

Mitigation Measure HW1:

- The majority of the trail alignment will be off-set, varying between 10 to 18 feet from the rail line, except at locations where rail at-grade crossings are proposed. Due to the known past practices of railroad companies to use diesel fuel as a method to control weeds, pre-construction soil sampling should occur at all proposed rail at grade crossing locations specified on the project design plans.
- If unknown wastes or suspect materials are discovered during construction by the contractor which he/she believes may involve hazardous wastes/materials, the contractor shall:

- Immediately stop work in the vicinity of the suspected contaminant, removing workers and the public from the area;
- Notify the Project Engineer of the implementing Agency;
- Secure the area as directed by the Project Engineer; and,
- Notify the implementing agency's Hazardous Waste/Materials Coordinator.

e. *For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?*

The proposed trail alignment is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

f. *For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?*

The proposed trail alignment is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip and would not subject trail users to hazards from aircraft overflights. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

g. *Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The proposed trail corridor alignment is not located within any portion of an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan and therefore, no impact to this issue is anticipated. Currently, the proposed trail alignment is not readily accessible to emergency response personnel and associated equipment and vehicles. As described in the project description, overall the implementation of the proposed project is expected to improve safety conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists currently utilizing the numerous informal trails along the length of the corridor.

h. *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?*

The proposed trail alignment is not located near wildland fire areas. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

i. *Would the project result in the creation of any new adverse safety hazards or expose people to any new potential safety hazards?*

Potential safety issues, which are inherent to the proposed project:

- \$ Several different styles and height of barriers are proposed between the trail and tracks in order to keep users off the tracks. However, the tracks will remain completely open to anyone approaching from an at-grade crossing;
- \$ Channeling users into a generally five foot wide corridor may result in user conflicts. These user conflicts are created from the mixture of uses and specifically the differences in experience, movements, stopping abilities, and speeds. Some users may not pay attention to warning signs or the movements of other trail users. Cyclists may exhibit a lack of patience when confronted with a slower moving group ahead, resulting in dangerous passing attempts; and
- \$ Irregular trail surface conditions may cause tripping, and slipping.

As identified above, the project will experience safety problems of its own, although substantially less than the more heavily-used facilities such as Mission Beach (San Diego) and Newport Beach due to the amount of commercial activity along these corridors and close proximity of residences. Although, the proposed project may result in user conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians these impacts will be off-set by providing appropriate warning devices such as signage and trail markings. Bike speeds on the proposed project are not anticipated to be as high as the paved trails described above, and a large number of commuter bicyclists are not expected to use the trail due to the proposed decomposed granite (DG) surface of the trail. This issue is considered less than significant.

Development of the trail, at-grade crossings, undercrossings, and barriers will increase safety related to the railroad tracks by reducing illegal crossings and people walking on the tracks. In order to reduce the potential safety impacts the trail will be designed to generally-accepted Caltrans and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) standards, which include advisory and warning signs to advise users of hazards. The project proposes to use the ANumber 8" railroad crossing signal device at most at-grade railroad crossings (Corto Lane and T Street are proposed to use ANumber 9" signals) to alert users of an approaching train. The Number 8 railroad crossing signal device is an approved signal device by the CPUC. The signal device is activated when a train moves over a sensor that is in the railroad track a certain distance from the crossing. When the sensor is activated, it determines the speed of the train and is programmed to activate the crossing signal (flashing lights and bells) for a specified amount of time until the train passes through the crossing. In addition to the crossing signal device, the train engineer blows the train's horn to notify all people in the vicinity of the train tracks and crossing that the train is approaching. The crossing signal device operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is activated whenever a train passes over a sensor. The proposed project will discourage illegal railroad crossings through the design, type of barriers, signage, and enforcement proposed for the trail. The trail will have the beneficial effect of providing a smooth surface for walking and cycling and will enable easy accessibility to the formal crossings (at-grade and undercrossings). This issue is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant hazard or hazardous materials impacts have been identified.

5.8 Hydrology and Water Quality

a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. Stormwater runoff is not anticipated to be much greater than the existing condition because subsurface vertical drains will be installed along the trail corridor between the trail and the toe of the slope. The drains are anticipated to actually reduce the amount of siltation in the stormwater runoff. Development of the trail will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. Development of the trail will not affect groundwater. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. Development of the trail will somewhat alter the drainage pattern of the area along the trail alignment; however, the drainage pattern along the trail alignment will not substantially change. In addition, development of the trail will not alter the course of a stream or river. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

See c. above.

e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Development of the trail will not substantially increase the amount of stormwater runoff that currently drains from the trail alignment area nor will the trail or users of the trail contribute polluted runoff into the stormwater drainage system or the Pacific Ocean. In addition, the

project will use subsurface vertical drains along the trail corridor between the trail and the toe of the slope. Less siltation from stormwater runoff is anticipated. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

See *e.* above.

g. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. Housing is not a component of this project. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

h. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?

See *g.* above.

i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

See *g.* above. In addition, no levee or dam is located in the vicinity of the proposed trail alignment. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

j. Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

Seiche will not occur at the trail alignment because no levees or dams are located in the vicinity of the trail alignment. According to the preliminary geotechnical report, the 100-year and 500-year tsunami runup at the trail alignment is estimated to be 4 feet and 6 feet, respectively. If the tsunami coincides with high tides, the maximum runup level would be approximately 13 feet. Under this scenario, portions of the trail alignment nearest the ocean could potentially be impacted. The likelihood that a large tsunami would coincide with high tide is considered rare and this issue is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant hydrology and water quality impacts have been identified.

5.9 Land Use and Planning

Statewide Goals and Objectives

The California Coastal Act of 1976 recognized the significant value of coastal resources. The Coastal Act is intended to ensure that coastal areas of California are developed in a manner responsive to

public objectives. The Coastal Act protects the visual and physical use and enjoyment of the coastal zone by the public and mandates that each local government within the coastal zone prepares a specific public access component. The Coastal Act policies, which are related to shoreline access, are as follows: Section 30210. Requires maximum access and broad recreational opportunities for all people in beach and coastal areas and Section 30211. Requires that new development not interfere with the public's right of access to coastal areas. The trail will provide formal access to the beach where currently, other than the existing formal crossings, the access to the beach is illegal trespassing across the railroad.

City Goals and Objectives

The project area is defined by the City of San Clemente as the Pico/North Beach and the Del Mar/Pier Bowl areas. Both areas have been the subject of several design plans, including the Pier Bowl Redevelopment Plan in 1975, San Clemente Downtown Plan 2000 in 1983, the Pier Bowl Specific Plan in 1993, the General Plan update in 1993, and the Coastal Element 1995 (not approved by the CCC).

Goals and Objectives for the coast are specifically addressed in the Coastal Element and coast accessibility and circulation are addressed in the Circulation and Parks and Recreation Elements. The Coastal Element is the land use component of the City's Local Coastal Program, required by the California Coastal Act of 1976. Both documents are integral parts of the City's General Plan.

The Coastal Element sets goals and policies for future development for the San Clemente coast. In addition to retaining and enhancing existing land uses, the Coastal Element goals include development of recreation oriented commercial and supporting uses which are in harmony with, yet capitalize on the ocean and beachfront and hillsides and canyons and are attractive and compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods and commercial districts.[@] Specifically, Chapter 3, Section 303 Goals and Policies of the Coastal Element addresses providing improved beach access points along the City's coast line.

Project Impacts

a. Physically divide an established community?

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail along the beach. No residential areas of the City of San Clemente will be physically altered or separated from one another by the trail alignment. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

The railroad corridor and the beach are identified as Open Space/Recreation areas in the General Plan and Zoning Code. The proposed land use is consistent with those designations. Additionally, the project is consistent with established goals of the City of San Clemente, regional goals for alternative transportation and Statewide goals for increased recreation opportunities and coastal access. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

The railroad corridor and the beach are currently used as a public facility providing both transportation and recreation. The project will enhance the existing trail and recreational opportunities. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- c. *Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?*

Development of the proposed multi-use trail does not conflict with any habitat conservation plan. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant land use and planning impacts have been identified.

5.10 Mineral Resources

Project Impacts

- a. *Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?*

Development of the proposed multi-use trail will not impact any known mineral resources. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- b. *Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?*

Development of the proposed multi-use trail will not impact any known mineral resources nor is the trail alignment identified as a mineral resource recover site on any local plans. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant mineral resources impacts have been identified.

5.11 Noise

Existing Conditions

Ocean surf, trains, train horn blowing, at-grade crossing whistle noise, and recreational activities associated with talking and beach use generate noise along the proposed trail alignment. Noise sensitive land uses in the project area consist of commercial uses (restaurants, hotel/motels) in the Pier Bowl area and residences primarily located along the top of the bluffs and some are located adjacent to the trail. Currently OCTA maintains the railway right-of-way and is required to remove and relocate large rocks on an intermittent basis and to place gravel along the tracks to reduce water ponding. This is accomplished by the use of bobcats, front loaders, and dump trucks. This construction equipment generates noise levels ranging from 70-100 dB(A).

Project Impacts

- a. *Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?*

The proposed project will potentially increase public use, which may result in increased noise levels. However, due to the high volume of public use currently to these public beaches (2-2.5 million annually), increased noise levels will be less than significant and the noise of the surf obscures both existing beach and trail use. Additional noise impacts may occur due to increased "horn-blowing" by train engineers, however, there is currently horn-blowing and a distinct bell type of noise associated with the existing at-grade crossings and horn-blowing associated with illegal track crossings. Implementation of the trail will result in five new pedestrian at-grade crossings (Dije Court, El Portal, Linda Lane, T-Street, and Lost Winds), improvement of one crossing (Corto), and the horn-blowing and bell noise associated with each crossing. The at-grade crossing signal device is activated when a train moves over a sensor that will be placed in the railroad track a certain distance from the crossing. When the sensor is activated, it determines the speed of the train and is programmed to activate the crossing signal (flashing lights and bells) for a specified amount of time until the train passes through the crossing. Using this new sensor technology in the PUC approved ANumber 8" or ANumber 9" at-grade crossing signal will reduce the amount of time the engineer blows his horn and the time the crossing signal is activated. In addition, channeling users to at-grade crossings will result in a reduction in the need for the train engineer to blow his horn along long stretches of the track to warn illegal pedestrian track crossers of the approaching train. Overall, the marginal increase in noise associated with the at-grade crossings is considered periodic and a less than significant impact.

- b. *Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. Construction of the trail will not generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise because the project does not include pile driving or any other construction technique that could produce groundborne

vibration or noise. The pilings for the Mariposa elevated boardwalk and pedestrian bridges at Trafalgar, Montalvo, and Riviera will be cast-in-place and will not require pile driving. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- c. *A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?*

See *a.* above. In addition, along a small portion of the trail long-term noise could result from a gas powered blower used to remove debris from along the trail alignment. The measured maximum noise level of a blower is 90 dB at 50 feet. The impacts are not considered substantial since the project is not immediately adjacent to commercial or residential areas. However, there are a few residential areas located adjacent to the trail corridor and these residences will experience about the same level of noise from the proposed project as they currently experience. This issue is not anticipated to result in a significant impact.

Trail users such as, walkers, joggers, and cyclists would generate additional noise. However, these noise impacts are not regulated under the City noise ordinance and the identified noise increase would be similar to the existing noise levels along the corridor. This issue is considered less than significant.

- d. *A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?*

Short term construction activities will temporarily result in an increase in noise. Most construction equipment generates maximum noise levels of approximately 70-90 dB at 50 feet. Project disturbance at the residences and commercial uses would be greatest during the initial grading activities, which includes the removal and relocation of large rocks. A concrete pump would be utilized to pump concrete from the mixers stationed along the right-of-way to construct some portions of the pedestrian bridges, undercrossings, and stairways. Concrete pumps and concrete mixers generate maximum noise levels of approximately 72-90 dB at 50 feet. The concrete mixers and pumps will typically be operated for several minutes at full load periodically throughout the day; although, the project will not require the use of concrete pumps every day. Construction will only occur during the hours for construction as specified in the City's zoning ordinance, which are typical daytime business hours.

A staging area for storing equipment and tools would be located at areas closest to the construction of the trail, possibly utilizing portions of existing public areas. Noise generated from the staging area is expected to be limited to the parking of construction equipment and warming up the engines prior to leaving the staging area. A tractor would be used to hard pack the sand for the trail located on sand. Tractors generate maximum noise levels of approximately 75-95 dB at 50 feet. There are a few residential areas located adjacent to the trail corridor. Construction impacts are considered minimal and of short duration. This issue is considered less than significant.

- e. *For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?*

The proposed multi-use trail is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- f. *For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?*

The proposed multi-use trail is not located with the vicinity of a private airstrip. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant noise impacts have been identified.

5.12 Population and Housing

Project Impacts

- a. *Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. The project will not induce population growth in the area either directly or indirectly. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- b. *Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. The project will not displace any existing housing. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- c. *Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. The project will not displace any existing housing or people. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant population and housing impacts have been identified.

5.13 Public Services

Project Impacts

Fire, Emergency Medical Services, and Lifeguard Services - Currently, there is effectively no fire protection services provided to the trail alignment as the alignment is currently vacant. After the trail is developed there will continue to be little need for fire protection services as no structures are proposed as part of the project. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

However, the need for emergency medical services will increase because trail users will probably have accidents with one another and may be injured and require medical attention. The need for emergency medical services is not expected to significantly increase beyond current needs. This issue is considered less than significant.

Lifeguard services are provided by the City. There is a lifeguard headquarters building north of the Pier and four guard towers located between the Pier and North Beach. Twenty lifeguards are on duty in the summer and staffing is significantly reduced in the winter. The lifeguards use two vehicles (small trucks), one for patrolling the beach north of the pier and the other for patrolling south of the pier. The project could potentially attract more people to the City, increasing the number of beach users, and the lifeguard workload throughout the City. Lifeguard manpower is reduced during fall and winter, after the tourist season. Although, the temperate climate of Southern California will attract users to the coastal trail year round, lifeguards indicate the demand of additional services during the off peak season may have an impact on lifeguard resources. However, the increase demand will not be substantial enough to require the development of new lifeguard facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. This issue is considered less than significant.

Police Protection - The proposed trail alignment is currently policed by the City of San Clemente through their contract with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. The railroad tracks are policed by OCTA provided Sheriff's. After the trail is developed, the City expects that an additional Community Services Officer will need to be hired in order to effectively police the trail alignment with the assistance of the Sheriff's department. The addition of a one officer does not constitute a significant impact. The new officer would work out of existing City police department facilities and no new construction would be required. This issue is considered less than significant.

Schools - The proposed project will not have an adverse impact on any schools within the vicinity of the trail alignment. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

Parks and Other Public Facilities - These facilities will not be adversely impacted by the proposed multi-use trail. The trail may induce more use of the beach due to increased access; however, facilities such as parking areas and public restrooms are currently adequate to meet the increase use. This issue not considered a significant impact.

5.14 Recreation

Existing Conditions

The Coastal Act policies require provisions for public, low cost recreation and visitor serving facilities by requiring that suitable land be designated for these uses and that they be given priority. As described in Section 3.0-Purpose and Need of this EA/IS, the Coastal Element identifies several policies related to enhancing recreation opportunities through development of formal beach accesses. In addition, the Coastal Element provides for maintaining and enhancing the existing variety of visitor servicing uses concentrated in the Downtown, North Beach, and the Pier Bowl areas and directs the City to Evaluate and implement, as feasible, a pedestrian beach walk connecting North Beach with the Pier Bowl and south to Calafia Beach (GP Policy 1.13.11).@

Beach recreation consists of general passive beach use, such as sunbathing, and active uses including volleyball, swimming, board and body surfing, and fishing. Volleyball courts, barbecue pits, and picnic benches are located north and south of the lifeguard building. Swimming and surfing occur all along the area north and south of the Pier.

According to the City lifeguards, beach attendance has remained relatively steady through the 1990's at approximately 2 to 2.5 million persons per year. The peak month attendance occurs in July or August and averages approximately 325,000 persons. Several special events occur at the beach each year drawing additional people to the City. These include the Ocean Festival (family and lifeguard competitions), the San Clemente Sea Feast, Surf Contests and the arrival of Beach Trains from inland cities every summer weekend.

The existing beach area, defined as the area above the mean sea level (MSL). The area of existing dry beach is approximately 520,000 square feet, or twelve (12) acres between the Pier and North Beach according to data presented in the *Coast of California Storm and Tidal Wave Study, San Diego Region* with the majority of this area casting north and south of Mariposa Point.

Existing public access points from the bluffs to the railroad right-of-way occur at (7) locations north of the Pier and six (6) south of the pier. Access across the railroad to the beach is provided at three formal pedestrian at-grade crossings, one vehicle at-grade crossing, one overcrossing, and one undercrossing. The project proposes to provide four new pedestrian at-grade railroad crossings north of the Pier (Dije Court, El Portal, Linda Lane and Corto Lane) and two new pedestrian at-grade railroad crossings south of the Pier (T-Street and Lost Winds). Improvements to two existing underpasses are proposed north of the Pier (El Portal and Linda Lane) and two are proposed south of the Pier (Riviera and Montalvo). If funding becomes available in the future, undercrossings would be provided at Dije, Mariposa, Linda Lane and Calafia. Beach access stairs would also be provided at the existing Calafia at grade crossing.

Surfing is very popular in the City due to the high quality of surfing conditions. Popular surfing spots along the trail corridor include: San Clemente Pier; 204's; T Street; Lost Winds; Riviera; and State Park.

Surfing is restricted in some areas during times of high beach use in the summer. The Ablackball@ is a reference to the yellow flag with a solid black circle in the center hoisted by lifeguards to indicate

when the restriction is in effect. Surfing is blackballed along the beach between the lifeguard headquarters building and the Mariposa access way from 10 AM to 7 PM in the summer months. Surfing is always allowed from the Pier north to the lifeguard headquarters building, and at 204's between Mariposa access way and North Beach.

Project Impacts

- a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*

The proposed project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks; however, the trail may induce more use of the beach due to increased access provided by the trail. The increased use of the beach will not be so significant as to require additional public facilities, lifeguards or lifeguard administration office space or towers. This issue is considered less than significant.

- b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

The proposed project is the construction of a recreational facility. This question is not applicable to the proposed project.

- c. Will the proposed project adversely impact surfing conditions?*

The project provides an overall beneficial impact on access along the beach as permanent access will be available parallel to the shore around Mariposa Point on the proposed trail. The existing condition of shore-parallel access will also remain available along the beach.

Beach access may be impeded during construction. However, construction is proposed to occur in the fall/ winter seasons to avoid the peak beach use season, thus minimizing this impact. The contractor will be required to maintain a staging and stockpile area off the beach area to keep construction equipment and materials out of the wave zone during high tides and/ or moderate to high surf.

The proposed trail will not extend into the surf zone. Wave backwash from the proposed trail will not increase over that caused by existing rock revetment because the trail does not extend into the surf zone or beyond the existing rip rap revetment. Wave backwash occurs approximately once per year (on average) and will not result in worse wave reflection conditions than already exist. Wave reflection off the existing revetment occurs several times a year at high tide and large surf conditions.

The existing toe of the coastal bluff is protected by the railroad and rock revetment. This coastal area does not serve as a substantial source of sediment to the littoral cell and the

proposed project will not decrease the amount of sand sediment being deposited into the system. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant recreation impacts have been identified.

5.15 Transportation/Traffic

Existing Conditions

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) conducted a Non-Motorized Transportation Study for Orange-County in 1995. The report evaluated the need for local and regional trails and ranked these trails based on regional connectivity, multi-jurisdictional capacity, existing and projected demand, ease of implementation, service to parks and schools, services to employment centers, and service to multi-modal centers. The highest available score was thirteen. The San Clemente Coastal Trail was ranked 10 on the list, achieving one of the highest priorities for the Orange County Study.

The City's General Plan goals support a trail system and increased public access. The goals are identified below.

Coastal Element policies which relate to the trail system include:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Policy VIII.3 | Evaluate and implement, as feasible, a pedestrian promenade connecting North beach with the Pier Bowl and south to Calafia Beach (GP Policy 1.13.1). |
| Policy VIII.4 | Designate pedestrian and bike routes that link selected public places to encourage walking and exercise, and help visitors experience the City's attractions without complete reliance on the automobile (GP Policy 2.1.5). |
| Policy VIII.5 | Develop and adopt the planned bikeway system depicted on Figure 2-3 of this element which is consistent with the County of Orange Master Plan of County wide Bikeways, and other adopted master plans, to assure that local bicycle routes will be compatible with routes of neighboring jurisdictions (GP Policy 4.12.2). |
| Policy VIII.6 | Require plans for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to give priority to providing continuity and closing gaps in the bikeway and sidewalk network (GP policy 4.12.6). |
| Policy VIII.7 | The City shall develop bike routes to the primary and secondary beach access points, and shall place directional signs and bike racks at each primary and secondary access points. |

The Coastal Element specifically addresses the desire to preserve and enhance coastal access.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Goal IX. | Provide and maintain a comprehensive and safe beach access network and improve the City's public coastal access system wherever possible. |
|----------|---|

Corresponding policies for implementation of access goals include:

- Policy IX.1 Improvements of beach facilities and beach access points which are administered by the City of San Clemente shall specifically be intended to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of maximum public use of the beach and the ocean.
- Policy IX.2 Monitor and attempt to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing El Camino Real and the railway along the coast (GP Policy 4.15.1). Specifically, the City shall work with the Orange County Transit Authority (OCTA) to implement a safe and legal railroad crossing at Linda Lane Park, and an existing access centrally located between Linda Land Park and North Beach...@
- Policy IX.4 The maintenance and enhancement of public non vehicular access to the shoreline shall be of a primary importance when evaluating any future public or private improvements in the Coastal Zone.
- Policy IX.7 The City of San Clemente shall promote not only increased access to the shoreline, but increased safety of access. Improved access for the handicapped shall be provided to at least one of the primary access points administered by the City.
- Policy IX.11 Funding shall be actively sought to maintain and improve existing access ways. The City shall seek funding for project that will enhance public access, including:
 - \$ Improved pedestrian railroad crossings through the construction of at-grade, above-grade, or below-grade crossings at existing access ways.
 - \$ Additional off-street public parking spaces to serve beach access ways through the maximized use of existing beach parking lots and creation of new parking lots where feasible.

Project Impacts

- a. *Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?*

The proposed multi-use trail is considered an alternative mode of transportation and will serve to reduce the number of vehicle trips coastal visitors will need to make while in the area. The project will not result in a substantial increase in traffic. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- b. *Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?*

The proposed multi-use trail is considered an alternative mode of transportation and will serve to reduce the number of vehicle trips coastal visitors will need to make while in the area. The

project will not exceed any level of service standards. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- c. *Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?*

The proposed multi-use trail will not impact air traffic patterns. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- d. *Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?*

The proposed project will not alter any roadways. From the perspective of railroad function, the project will enhance functionality of the rail by reducing illegal pedestrian crossings through the development of four new at-grade crossings and five improved undercrossings. The trail will also enhance the viability of the corridor as part of a local and regional bikeway network, providing a consistent riding surface for all levels of bicyclists. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- e. *Result in inadequate emergency access?*

The trail is not designed to provide formal emergency vehicle access along the entire length of the corridor. However, the trail will be accessible at certain locations including both transit stations, at the two public parking lots, from the proposed pedestrian at-grade crossings, and at ramps to and from the beach. Because a 10-foot wide clear corridor will be maintained, it is possible that portions of the trail corridor may become more accessible to limited types of emergency vehicles (such as a lifeguard jeep). Final design of the trail will include removable bollards, adequate curb cuts, pavement strength, pathway horizontal and vertical geometries, and vertical clearance to allow access by some emergency vehicles. However, the elevated boardwalk around Mariposa Point will not be accessible to emergency motorized vehicles but will be accessible to bicycles. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- f. *Result in inadequate parking capacity?*

Along the proposed trail alignment there are 13 existing formal and/or informal crossings used to access the beach. Existing parking spaces are used by the beach goers who use the 13 formal/informal crossings. The proposed project is not creating new points of coastal access that would require a significant number of new parking spaces. Based on a review of existing peak period parking occupancy and comparable beach communities throughout California, usage of the beach and trail is highly correlated with the accessibility to available parking and regional transportation systems. During peak periods, metered or fee parking near the beach and trail alignment operates at 87 percent of capacity. With development of the proposed project, the remaining available peak season parking spaces (91 spaces) are expected to be occupied by trail users. Based on studies of shoreline trail versus beach usage, beach usage is highly seasonal and shoreline trail usage is relatively stable throughout the year. In other

words, peak period parking demand would increase only slightly, but the number of parked vehicles over the course of the year could increase up-to 20 percent. Overall, there is adequate existing parking to accommodate peak season off-peak parking needs. This issue is considered less than significant.

- g. *Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?*

The following are City objectives and policies, which further encourage the development of a citywide bicycle and pedestrian system. Objective 4.12.5 of the Circulation Element states the city should Aconstruct safe, convenient paths for bicycles and pedestrians so as to encourage these alternate forms of transportation.@ Additionally, objective 4.12.6 Arequire(s) plans for bicycles and pedestrian facilities to give priority to providing continuity and closing gaps in the bikeway and sidewalk network.@

The railroad is an important element of the City. Objective 4.11 of the Circulation Element states that the City should Aincrease commuter rail opportunities for both residents and employees in the City.@ Additionally, improved safety along the railroad is a goal of the General Plan as stated in policy 4.15.1: AMonitor and attempt to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing El Camino Real and then Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&.SF) railway along the coast.@

The project will not conflict with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation. To the contrary, the project will provide an essential element in the City's alternative transportation system. Based on the objectives of the proposed project, this issue is not considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant transportation/traffic impacts have been identified.

5.16 Utilities and Service Systems

Project Impacts

- a. *Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?*

The proposed trail will not generate wastewater. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- b. *Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

The proposed project will not require construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or the expansion of existing facilities. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- c. *Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

The trail will have a decomposed granite/natural surface and will not generate a significant amount of stormwater beyond that which is currently generated. No new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities will be required. This issue is considered less than significant.

- d. *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?*

Landscaping for the trail will consist of native, drought tolerant species and will not create a substantial new demand for water. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- e. *Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?*

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. The proposed project will not require construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or the expansion of existing facilities. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- f. *Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?*

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail. The proposed project will not generate a substantial amount of solid waste. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

- g. *Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?*

The proposed project will not generate a substantial amount of solid waste. However, the solid waste the trail does generate will need to be disposed of according to all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. This issue is not considered a significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are proposed as no significant utilities and service system impacts have been identified.

5.17 Mandatory Findings of Significance

- a. *Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?*

The biological resources impacts associated with development of the proposed project are considered minor and will not substantially impact biological resources. In addition, no significant cultural resources impact has been identified related to the proposed project.

- b. *Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?*

The significant impacts associated with development of the proposed multi-use trail when viewed in connection with the effects of past project, current projects, and probable future projects are not considered cumulatively considerable.

- c. *Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?*

The proposed project is development of a multi-use trail in the City of San Clemente adjacent to the beach and the OCTA railroad tracks. The proposed project will enhance the quality of life for beach users and members of the City of San Clemente who choose to use the trail. The trail will provide a safe recreational path for walking and biking and it will provide safe at-grade crossings.

6.0 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Biological Resources

- A potential impact to the San Diego Fairy Shrimp has been identified. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BR1 will reduce this potential significant impact to a level less than significant.
- A significant impact related to project impact of 0.11 acre of Southern California Bluff Scrub has been identified. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BR2 will reduce this significant impact to a level less than significant.

Hazardous Materials

- Due to the known past practices of railroad companies to use diesel fuel as a method to control weeds, preconstruction soil sampling should occur at all proposed rail at-grade crossing locations. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HW1 will reduce this significant impact to a level less than significant.

7.0 SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES/MONITORING PROGRAM

Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party	Timing
<p><i>Biological Resource</i></p> <p>BR1. The trail has been designed to avoid impacting the vernal pools. In order to ensure that all potential and known vernal pools have been avoided during final design and construction, a certified biologist will review the final design plans and identify areas which may need to be temporarily fenced off during construction. This measure shall be complied with to the satisfaction of the City of San Clemente Planning Department.</p> <p>BR2. Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub shall be replanted on-site at a ratio of 2:1 (i.e., 0.22 acre of habitat creation). Figure 2 in the <i>Biological Constraints Analysis</i> identifies locations for possible sage scrub creation and enhancement. The recommendations contained in the <i>Biological Constraints Analysis</i> for replanting bluff scrub shall be followed to the satisfaction of the City of San Clemente.</p>	City of San Clemente	Prior to grading
<p><i>Hazardous Waste/</i></p> <p>HW1. The majority of the trail alignment will be off-set, varying between 10 to 18 feet from the rail line, except at locations where at-grade trail crossings are proposed. Due to the known past practices of railroad companies to use diesel fuel as a method to control weeds, pre-construction soil sampling should occur at all proposed rail at-grade crossing locations specified on the project design plans.</p> <p>If unknown wastes or suspect materials are discovered during construction by the contractor which he/she believes may involve hazardous wastes/materials, the contractor shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immediately stop work in the vicinity of the suspected contaminant, removing workers and the public from the area; - Notify the Project Engineer of the implementing Agency; - Secure the area as directed by the Project Engineer; and, - Notify the implementing agency's Hazardous Waste/Materials Coordinator. 	City of San Clemente	During construction

8.0 PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

1. Delaplane, Mark and Kramer, Anne, California Coastal Commission
2. Varoujian Jinbochim, California Public Utilities Commission
3. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration,
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environmental/nepa/ta6640.htm.
4. O'Connor, Denise, California Department of Transportation, Division of
Environmental Analysis
5. Tapia, Samuel, California Department of Transportation, District 12
6. Austin, Deanna, Orange County Transportation Authority
7. Griggs, Mary, California State Lands, Division of Environmental Planning and
Management
8. Hodge, Bill, Orange County Transportation Authority
9. Fluharty, Marilyn, California Department of Fish & Game
10. Liebster, Jack, California Coastal Conservancy
11. Rozzelle, Richard, California Department of Parks and Recreation
12. Bickert, Kate, Rails to Trails Conservancy
13. Patel, Naresh, Southern California Regional Rail Authority
14. Ron Mathieu, Southern California Regional/Rail Authority
15. Laura Crum, California Department of Fish and Game
16. Jeremy Haas, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
17. Mark Durham, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
18. Steve Lehman, California State Lands Commission

9.0 DISTRIBUTION LIST

State of California Agencies

California Coastal Commission
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200 Oceangate, 10th Floor, Ste. 1000
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California Department of Transportation
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Irvine CA 92612-1699

California Department of Transportation – District 12
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3337 Michelson Drive, Ste. CN380
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California Department of Transportation – District 12
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California Office of Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 942898
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

California Public Utilities Commission
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Los Angeles, CA 90015-1105

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1400 Tenth Street
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9420 Telstar Avenue
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100 Howe Avenue Suite 100 South
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California Coastal Conservancy
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San Clemente, CA 92672

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26 O'farrell St, Suite 400
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Local and Regional Agencies

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County of Orange
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Santa Ana, CA 92702

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Santa Ana, CA 92702-4048

Orange County Transportation Authority
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Orange, CA 92613-1584

South Coast Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2366
Capistrano Beach, CA 92624

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
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Los Angeles, CA 90017

Surfrider Foundation
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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
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10.0 DOCUMENT PREPARERS

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RBF Consulting
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Irvine, CA 92618

Responsibility: Preparation of the Phase I Initial Site Assessment

11.0 REFERENCES

1. Federal Highway Administration.
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environmental/nepa/ta6640.htm
2. City of San Clemente. *Safety Recommendations for the San Clemente Railroad Corridor*. January 19, 2000.
3. City of San Clemente. *City of San Clemente General Plan*. 1993.
4. City of San Clemente. *City of San Clemente, Pier Bowl Specific Plan*. 1993.
5. City of San Clemente. *City of San Clemente Coastal Element*. 1995.
6. San Diego Natural History Museum. *Paleontological Resources, County of San Diego*. 1993.
7. Caltrans, Standard Environmental Reference webpage - <http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/>

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RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO PUBLIC AND OTHER AGENCY COMMENTS

The Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail in the City of San Clemente Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) was circulated for public review for a period of 30 days extending from April 3, 2003 to May 2, 2003. The Draft IS/MND was distributed to a variety of public agencies and individuals.

The agencies, organizations, and interested persons listed on the "Response to Comments Index" submitted comments on the Draft IS/MND during the public review period. Each comment submitted in writing is included, along with a written response where determined necessary. Each comment letter is identified with a letter in the upper right corner of the first page of the letter. The individual comments have been given reference numbers, which appear in the right margin next to the bracketed comment. For example, Letter A will have comment numbers A1, A2, etc.

In response to comments received, certain revisions have been made in the IS/MND. These revisions to the IS/MND are generally minor text changes that do not constitute significant additional information that changes the outcome of the environmental analysis or require recirculation of the document. All such changes are noted in the responses to comments. The agencies, organizations, and individuals that submitted comments on the Draft IS/MND are identified in Table 1 Responses to Comments Index. The comment letters and responses are provided on the following pages.

TABLE 1
RESPONSES TO COMMENTS INDEX

COMMENTOR	LETTER REFERENCE
Federal Agencies	
No comment letter received.	N/A
State Agencies	
Governor's Office of Planning and Research	A1
Local Agencies	
Southern California Association of Governments (SANDAG)	B1
Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)	C1
Metrolink, Southern California Regional Rail Authority	D1 - D7
County of Orange Planning & Development Services Department	E1 - E12
Organizations	
No comment letter received.	N/A
Individuals	
No comment letter received.	N/A

LETTER A
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
May 5, 2003

Response to Comment A1

This letter acknowledges that the City has complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for the EIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. No further response is required.

LETTER B
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
April 28, 2003

Response to Comment B1

Comment noted. The proposed project is not regionally significant per SCAG Intergovernmental Review (IGR) Criteria and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Section 15206). No further response is necessary.

LETTER C
Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)
May 1, 2003

Response to Comment C1

As stated in the IS/MND, there is currently horn-blowing and a distinct bell type of noise associated with the existing at-grade crossings and horn-blowing associated with the numerous unsafe, illegal track crossings. Implementation of the trail will result in new pedestrian at-grade crossings, improvement of one crossing, and the horn-blowing and bell noise associated with each crossing. Use of the current motion sensing train detection technology, at the pedestrian at-grade crossings equipped with CPUC approved "Number 8" or Number 9" crossing warning devices, will not act to minimize the amount of time the engineer blows his/her horn. The train engineer's practice is to blow his/her horn ¼ mile in approach of each pedestrian at-grade crossing. Additionally, the pedestrian at-grade warning devices will activate consistent with the operational design based on proximity of crossings to one-another, track speed, train handling and mode of motion sensing equipment. The train detection equipment utilized for this application is intended to ensure the activation of the warning devices (bells and lights), not to reduce the time the warning devices are activated. However, overall, the marginal increase in noise associated with the at-grade crossings is considered periodic and a less than significant impact. While implementation of the trail will require horn-blowing and bell signals at each crossing, the marginal increase in the noise is not considered significant compared to the noise resulting currently from the at-grade crossings and numerous unsafe, illegal track crossings.

The City of San Clemente will coordinate all construction activity within the rail-corridor with the SCRRA's Right-of-Way Engineer.

LETTER D

Metrolink, Southern California Regional Rail Authority

May 1, 2003

Response to Comment D1

On page 6, the following two sentences have been added:

"Implementation of the project shall require the City to obtain a license agreement from OCTA, the land owner; and a Construction and Maintenance Agreement (C&M agreement) from SCRRA, the owner and maintainer of the train system. The City's contractor will need to enter into a Right of Entry agreement (Form No. 6) with SCRRA during the construction of the project".

Response to Comment D2

On page 14, the following two sentences have been added:

"All construction activity within the Rail-corridor shall be coordinated with the SCRRA's Right-of-Way Engineer. The SCRRA will decide on the type and amount of the safety control provided including, but not limited to, the use of an SCRRA flagman to provide protection of the Contractor's workers and rail activities".

Response to Comment D3

On page 15, the following two sentences have been added:

"A formal staging plan will be provided and the temporary crossings will meet the CPUC's requirements. The temporary crossings may include the use of temporary fencing, limited hours of access, and SCRRA flagmen."

Response to Comment D4

On page 79, third sentence under *Existing Conditions*, has been revised as follows:

"Currently SCRRA maintains the railway right-of-way..."

Response to Comment D5

Per this comment, the last three sentences on page 79 have been revised as follows:

"Use of the current motion sensing train detection technology, at the pedestrian at-grade crossings equipped with CPUC approved "Number 8" or Number 9" crossing warning devices, will not act to minimize the amount of time the engineer blows his/her horn. The train engineer's practice is to blow his/her horn ¼ mile in approach of each pedestrian at-grade crossing. Additionally, the pedestrian at-grade warning devices will activate consistent with the operational design based on proximity of crossings to one-another, track speed, train handling and mode of motion sensing equipment. The train detection equipment utilized for this application is intended to ensure the activation of the warning devices (bells and lights), not to reduce the time the warning devices are activated. However, overall, the marginal increase in noise associated with the at-grade crossings is considered periodic and a less than significant impact."

Response to Comment D6

The following paragraph has been added on page 79, after the third sentence under *Project Impacts*:

"The California Public Utilities, Code Section 7604 requires that a stream whistle, or air siren, or an air whistle shall be attached, and be sounded at a distance of at least 1,320 feet from the place where the railroad crosses any street, road, or highway, and be kept sounding at intervals until it has crossed the street, road or highway. Any railroad corporation violating this section is subject to a penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each violation. When the provisions of the section are not complied with, the railroad corporation is also liable for all damage sustained by any person, and caused by its locomotive, train, or cars."

Response to Comment D7

The following paragraph has been added on page 79, after the first sentence on the second paragraph:

"The noise generated by the train whistle is regulated under the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Title 49 (Transportation) Chapter II. Part 299 (Railroad Locomotive Safety Standards), Section 129. This standard requires that each lead locomotive (or cab car) be provided with an audible warning device. The device must produce a minimum sound level of 96 dB(A) at 100 feet forward of the locomotive in its direction of travel."

LETTER E

Orange County Planning & Development Services Department

May 2, 2003

Response to Comment E1

The City acknowledges that the Marquita Storm Channel (M00S07) may not meet the Orange County Flood Control District's (OCFCD) current design criteria. Additionally, any future removal and reconstruction of the coastal trail and its appurtenant structures above the channel will be at the expense of the City.

Response to Comment E2

Comment noted. City will obtain encroachment permits for any work done within the OCFCD right-of-way.

Response to Comment E3

The proposed project will be appropriately protected from floods in accordance with FEMA regulations.

Response to Comment E4

The City will process Letters of Map Revision (LOMR) via FEMA if floodplains are changed.

Response to Comment E5

Comment noted. This comment addresses trail design issues and does not directly impact the environmental analysis in the IS/MND; therefore, no further discussion is necessary.

Response to Comment E6

Comment noted. This comment addresses trail design issues and does not directly impact the environmental analysis in the IS/MND; therefore, no further discussion is necessary.

Response to Comment E7

Comment noted. This comment addresses trail design issues and does not directly impact the environmental analysis in the IS/MND; therefore, no further discussion is necessary.

Response to Comment E8

Comment noted. This comment addresses trail design issues and does not directly impact the

Responses to Comments

environmental analysis in the IS/MND; therefore, no further discussion is necessary.

Response to Comment E9

Comment noted. This comment addresses trail design issues and does not directly impact the environmental analysis in the IS/MND; therefore, no further discussion is necessary.

Response to Comment E10

The proposed project is designed to reduce car trips. The project encourages local people to walk and have an easy, safe access to the trail and the beach. The City does not anticipate significant parking impact associated with tourist use of the trail.

Response to Comment E11

Comment noted.

Response to Comment E12

City acknowledges the responsibility of meeting the Assembly Bill 939 (AB 939) mandate of 50% waste disposal reduction, and the need to prepare AB 939 solid waste planning documents. The documents include the Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE), the Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE), and the Non-Disposal Facility Element (NDFE). The construction waste generated by the proposed project will be disposed properly according to the AB 939 requirements.

MAY. 8. 2003 3:48PM

6192911348DIVISION

NO. 2199

LETTER A



Gray Davis
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse



Tal Finney
Interim Director

May 5, 2003

Jim Pechous
City of San Clemente
910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100
San Clemente, CA 92673

Subject: Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail
SCH#: 2003041020

Dear Jim Pechous:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on May 2, 2003, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

A1

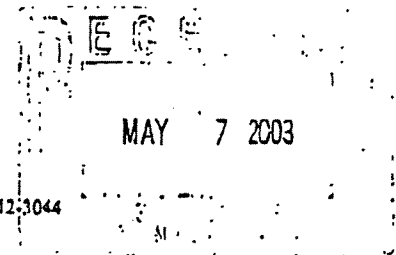
Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts
Director, State Clearinghouse

1400 TENTH STREET P.O. BOX 3044 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95812-3044
(916)445-0613 FAX(916)323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov

RECEIVED TIME MAY. 15. 8:46AM



- - MAY. 8. 2003 3:48PM

6192911348 DIVISION

NO. 2199 P. 6/6

**Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base****LETTER A**

SCH# 2003041020
Project Title Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail
Lead Agency San Clemente, City of

Type Neg Negative Declaration
Description The proposed project is a 2.37 mile pedestrian beach trail in the City of San Clemente. The trail will be constructed generally as a five foot wide trail and may have a shoulder on one or both sides achieving a total width of 10 feet to allow for periodic railroad and city maintenance.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Jim Pechous
Agency City of San Clemente
Phone 939.381.8195 **Fax**
email
Address 910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100
City San Clemente **State** CA **Zip** 92673

Project Location

County Orange
City San Clemente
Region
Cross Streets Adjacent to existing OCTA (railroad right-of-way)
Parcel No.
Township **Range** **Section** **Base** USGS

Proximity to:

Highways I-5
Airports
Railways
Waterways Pacific Ocean
Schools
Land Use Existing OCTA railroad right-of-way, General Plan OS1- Open Space; Zoning Ordinance OS1-CZ Open Space/Coastal Zone.

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Air Quality; Archaeology-Historic; Drainage/Absorption; Flood Plain/Flooding; Growth Inducing; Noise; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Wetland/Riparian; Wildlife; Landuse

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; California Coastal Commission; Department of Conservation; Department of Fish and Game; Region 5; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 12; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 8; Native American Heritage Commission; Public Utilities Commission; State Lands Commission

Date Received 04/03/2003 **Start of Review** 04/03/2003 **End of Review** 05/02/2003

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

RECEIVED TIME MAY. 15. 8:46AM

LETTER B

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS

Main Office

818 West Seventh Street

12th Floor

Los Angeles, California

90017-3435

1 (213) 236-1800

f (213) 236-1825

www.sca9.ca.gov

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Angeles County • Melvyn Andrews, Compton •
Harry Baldwin, San Gabriel • Bruce Barrows,
Cerritos • George Ross, Bell • Hal Bernson, Los
Angeles • Ken Blackwood, Los Angeles • Robert
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Viejo • Sam Sykes, Walnut • Paul Teitel, Alhambra •
Sidney Tyler, In. Pasadena • Toniya Reyes Uranga,
Long Beach • Dennis Withburn, Calabasas • Jack
Winn, Los Angeles • Zach Yusefhan, Glendale •
Dennis P. Zinn, Los Angeles

Orange County: Charles Smith, Orange County
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Riverside County: Bob Buser, Riverside County
• Ron Loveridge, Riverside • Jeff Miller, Corona •
Greg Peters, Cathedral City • Ron Rieber, Temecula •
Charles White, Moreno Valley

San Bernardino County: Paul Blanc, San Bernardino County • Bill Alexander, Rancho Cucamonga • Lawrence Dale Babbow • Ly Ann Garcia, Grand Terrace • Susan Longville, San Diego • Gary Omit, Ontario • Deborah

2001 Judy Mikels, Ventura County -
 2002 Simi Valley - Carl Morehouse, San
 Buenaventura - Toni Young, Port Hueneme

Riverside County Transportation Commission:
Robin Lowe, Home:

Western County Transportation Commission:
Map Davis, Simi Valley: 050511

RECEIVED

April 28, 2003

APR 30 2003

Mr. Jim Pechous
Senior Planner
City of San Clemente
910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100
San Clemente, CA 92672

**RE: SCAG Clearinghouse No. I 20030192 Railroad Corridor Pedestrian
Beach Trail in the City of San Clemente**

Dear Mr. Pechous:

Thank you for submitting the Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail in the City of San Clemente for review and comment. As areawide clearinghouse for regionally significant projects, SCAG reviews the consistency of local plans, projects and programs with regional plans. This activity is based on SCAG's responsibilities as a regional planning organization pursuant to state and federal laws and regulations. Guidance provided by these reviews is intended to assist local agencies and project sponsors to take actions that contribute to the attainment of regional goals and policies.

We have reviewed the Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail in the City of San Clemente, and have determined that the proposed Project is not regionally significant per SCAG Intergovernmental Review (IGR) Criteria and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Section 15206). Therefore, the proposed Project does not warrant comments at this time. Should there be a change in the scope of the proposed Project, we would appreciate the opportunity to review and comment at that time.

A description of the proposed Project was published in SCAG's April 1-15, 2003 Intergovernmental Review Clearinghouse Report for public review and comment.

The project title and SCAG Clearinghouse number should be used in all correspondence with SCAG concerning this Project. Correspondence should be sent to the attention of the Clearinghouse Coordinator. If you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 236-1867. Thank you.

Sincerely,

JEFFREY M. SMITH, AICP
Senior Regional Planner
Intergovernmental Review

RECEIVED TIME MAY. 15. 8:46AM



LETTER C

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Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer

May 1, 2003

Jim Holloway
Community Development Director
City of San Clemente
910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100
San Clemente, CA 92673

Subject: Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail Mitigated Negative Declaration

Dear Mr. Holloway:

OCTA is in support of the project and is offering these comments as areas of concerns that need to be addressed for successful completion of this project.

In regards to the noise impacts of the project, it should be noted that the increase of five additional at grade crossings will result in increased train whistle noise. California Public Utilities, Code Section 7604 requires that a stream whistle, or air siren, or an air whistle shall be attached, and be sounded at a distance of at least 1,320 feet from the place where the railroad crosses any street, road, or highway, and be kept sounding at intervals until it has crossed the street, road or highway. Any railroad corporation violating this section is subject to a penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each violation. When the provisions of the section are not complied with, the railroad corporation is also liable for all damage sustained by any person, and caused by its locomotive, train, or cars. The net effect of the existing at-grade crossings along with the proposed five new at-grade crossings may result in the train whistle being blown continuously along the entire trail. 2. City of San Clemente should coordinate all construction activity within the rail-corridor with the SCRRA's Right-of-Way Engineer.

C1

The Orange County Transportation Authority appreciates the opportunity to comment on this project. I may be contacted at 714-560-5749 or cwright@octa.net.

Sincerely,

Christopher Wright
Associate Transportation Analyst

6192911348

LETTER D



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL RAIL AUTHORITY

Member Agencies:
Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
Orange County
Transportation Authority
Riverside County
Transportation Commission
San Bernardino
Associated Governments
Ventura County
Transportation Commission
Ex Officio Members:
Southern California
Association of Governments
San Diego Association
of Governments
State of California

May 1, 2003

File: S0001147

Mr. Jim Pechous
Associate Planner
City of San Clemente
910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100
San Clemente, CA 92673

**Subject: Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail
In the City of San Clemente
Comments on Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Dear Mr. Pechous:

This letter is in reference to the above-noted project located on the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA), Orange Subdivision between railroad milepost 203.80 and 206.10, from Metrolink San Clemente Station to Calafia Beach Pedestrian Crossing, in the City of San Clemente.

Thank you for sending a copy of the document for our review and comment. SCRRA is in support of eliminating the numerous unsafe, illegal crossings at various points along the proposed trail corridor. Providing legal crossings with proper warning devices, combined with fencing and barriers that deter the illegal crossing is a proactive approach to addressing a serious concern.

Throughout the development of this project we will continue to provide guidance and support. The following comments on the Draft Mitigation Negative Declaration are to clarify any misconceptions that may hinder the success of the proposed project.

Page 6, under Project Site Ownership:

A more accurate statement under this section is. "Implementation of the project shall require the City to obtain a license agreement from OCTA, the land owner; and a Construction and Maintenance Agreement (C&M agreement) from SCRRA, the owner and maintainer of the train system. The City's contractor will need to enter into a Right of Entry agreement (Form No. 6) with SCRRA during the construction of the project."

D1

Page 14, under the Construction section:

Reference should be made that all construction activity within the rail-corridor shall be coordinated with the SCRRA's Right-of-Way Engineer. It shall be SCRRA's sole decision on the type and amount of the safety control that shall be provided. This may include, but not be limited to, the use of an SCRRA Flagman to provide protection of the Contractor's workers and rail activities.

D2

Mr. Jim Pechous (San Clemente Ped Beach Trail)

May 1, 2003

Page 2

This section also states that "Throughout the construction process, beach access will be maintained". There is an increased liability that would be acquiesced when redirecting illegal access points to temporary non-legal access locations. A formal staging plan will need to be provided, and temporary crossings that meet the CPUC's requirements will also be needed. These temporary crossings can include the use of temporary fencing, limited hours of access, and SCRRA flagmen.

D3

Page 79 of the report refers to noise impacts:

The report incorrectly states, "Currently OCTA maintains the railway right-of-way..." this should actually say, "Currently SCRRA maintains the railway right-of-way..."

D4

The statement that begins at "Using this new sensor..." and ends with "...to warn illegal pedestrian track crossers of the approaching train" is incorrect. A more accurately statement is:

"Use of the current motion sensing train detection technology, at the pedestrian at-grade crossings equipped with CPUC approved "Number 8" or "Number 9" crossing warning devices, will not act to minimize the amount of time the engineer blows his/her horn. The train engineer's practice is to blow his/her horn 1/4 mile in approach of each pedestrian at-grade crossing. Additionally, the pedestrian at-grade warning devices will activate consistent with the operational design based on proximity of crossings to one-another, track speed, train handling and mode of motion sensing equipment. The train detection equipment utilized for this application is intended to ensure the activation of the warning devices (bells and lights), not to reduce the time the warning devices are activated. As can be expected, the installation of active pedestrian at-grade crossings where none had previously existed, will increase the noise level by the number of audible devices installed and the anticipated horn blowing by the train engineer for each of the newly installed pedestrian at-grade crossings."

D5

Reference should also be made that the California Public Utilities, Code Section 7604 requires that a stream whistle, or air siren, or an air whistle shall be attached, and be sounded at a distance of at least 1,320 feet from the place where the railroad crosses any street, road, or highway, and be kept sounding at intervals until it has crossed the street, road or highway. Any railroad corporation violating this section is subject to a penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each violation. When the provisions of the section are not complied with, the railroad corporation is also liable for all damage sustained by any person, and caused by its locomotive, train, or cars.

D6


The noise generated by the train whistle is regulated under the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Title 49 (Transportation) Chapter II. Part 229 (Railroad Locomotive Safety Standards), Section 129. This standard requires that each lead locomotive (or cab car) be provided with an audible warning device. The device must produce a minimum sound level of 96 dB(A) at 100 feet forward of the locomotive in its direction of travel.

D7

If you have any questions please call me at (213) 452-0249 by phone, (213) 452-0423 by fax and mathieur@scrta.net by email.

Mr. Jim Pechous (San Clemente Ped Beach Trail)
May 1, 2003
Page 3

Sincerely,


RON MATHIEU.
Manager Public Projects

RM:dq [A:S1147]

cc: Shohreh Dupuis (OCTA)
Bill Mock (OCTA)
Francisco Oaxaca
Mike McGinley
Naresh Patel
David Quirk
Marshall Allen
SCRRA Central Files

Mr. John Shurson
Assistant Director Public Projects
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
740 E. Carnegie Drive
San Bernardino, CA 92408-3571

Mr. Thomas Crowell
Senior Director Engineering HSR
810 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Mr. Mike Robertson, Senior Utilities Engineer
Rail Engineering Safety Branch
Public Utilities Commission, State of California
320 West 4th Street, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90013-1105

RECEIVED TIME MAY. 15. 8:46AM

MAY-02-2003 15:17 FROM: ENVIR

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17148346132

TO: 1 949 366 4750

P. 002/007

LETTER E



County of Orange Planning & Development Services Department

LARRY M. LEAMAN
INTERIM DIRECTOR

300 N. FLOWER ST.
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. BOX 4048
SANTA ANA, CA 92702-4048

NCL 03-043

May 02, 2003

Jim Pechous
City of San Clemente
Community Development Department
Planning Division
910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100
San Clemente, CA 92673

SUBJECT: MND for the Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail

Dear Mr. Pechous:

The above referenced item is a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the City of San Clemente. The project proposes a multi-use trail (pedestrians and bicycles) located adjacent to the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) railroad right-of-way. The trail is proposed to extend from North Beach (Metrolink Commuter Station) south to Calafia State Park, a length of approximately 2.37 miles.

The County of Orange has reviewed the MND and offers the following comments:

FLOOD

1. The proposed Railroad Corridor Pedestrian Beach Trail extending approximately 2.37 miles from North Beach (Metrolink Commuter Station) south to Calafia State Park in the City of San Clemente (City) crosses over the Marquita Storm Channel (M00S07) which was constructed in 1964 and may not meet the Orange County Flood Control District's (OCFCD) current design criteria. If in the future, it becomes necessary to improve this segment of the channel and the coastal trail impedes construction of improvements to the channel, the City should acknowledge that removal and reconstruction of the coastal trail and its appurtenant structures above the channel would need to be at the expense of the City.
2. Our records show that OCFCD has an easement for construction and maintenance of Marquita Storm Channel granted by the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway

E1

E2

Company (AT & SF) via License Agreement between OCFCD and AT & SF in 1964. Any work within OCFCD right-of-way will require encroachment permits from the County's Public Property Permits Section. For information regarding permit application, please contact Doug Witherspoon at (714) 834-2366.

E2
(cont.)

3. Portions of the project are located within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated 100-year flood hazard areas. The proposed project should be appropriately protected from floods in accordance with FEMA regulations.

E3

4. The City should process Letters of Map Revision (LOMR) via FEMA when floodplains are changed.

E4

OPEN SPACE/RECREATION

5. Fencing:

Regarding the proposed three-rail fence, we have found a three-rail fence can make a trail look "cluttered" and impair the view shed. Also, the heavy, square, concrete look of the proposed fencing (Figure 5a) seems aesthetically less pleasing in a coastal, open space environment. If a three-rail fence is required for safety purposes, consider a less-massive style fence. Impervious recycled materials manufactured to appear as cut lumber are another interesting option.

E5

We have found two-rail wood fencing the most attractive, least "intrusive" (two rather than three rails), and easiest to maintain (damaged rails can be easily removed and replaced). It also ably confines users to the trail. Attached are a diagram and a photo depicting standard County trail fencing for comparison and consideration.

6. Cross Grade:

We recommend you consider increasing the cross grade to 3%. Unless the surface is made of an impervious material it will not be possible to maintain a 2% cross grade, particularly on native soil.

E6

7. Drainage:

Please ensure proper drainage and reference International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) design recommendations. Also, please identify low areas, crown the trail where possible and divert water to drains. Generally, trail closures and increased maintenance costs are often related to improperly drained trails.

E7

8. Trail Section:

If the trail is to provide service vehicle access, a minimum 3" of aggregate base should be provided under native soil or disintegrated (decomposed) granite to ensure that vehicles do not damage the trail.

E8

9. Trail Tread:

A portion of the trail is proposed to be native soil. We suggest you consider using a soil cement or soil stabilizer throughout the project. Coastal trails tend to be the most popular of all trails. You can expect users day and night and in all types of weather conditions. High use trails and bikeways are recommended to have stronger sections, and a wider tread.

E9

10. Transportation/Traffic:

Page 88 of the MND indicates the need for increased vehicle parking will be less than significant. Since a formal trail does not exist and the public's use is very limited at this time, the comment may under-estimate the route's future popularity. The route will likely become a major County and tourist destination beyond its role as a gap-filling project.

This observation is made because several key goals are being met by the project. The route is master-planned and, as such, will provide the most opportunity to more of the public (linkages are made at end points and along the route). The trail will improve a route that was cautiously used by generations of residents. A completed trail will effectively invite users to the trail by way of signage and its interesting design. Events and activities will likely occur on the trail, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and area merchants can promote the trail as a tourist amenity.

E10

11. Summary:

In concept, we support the City's project and greatly appreciate the City's efforts to provide an improved, off-road trail for public use. Orange County as a whole will benefit from this project by improving safety and enhancing public access to a beautiful stretch of Orange County coastline.

E11

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste Diversion

12. The City of San Clemente is responsible for meeting the Assembly Bill 939 (AB 939) mandate of 50% disposal reduction, and for preparing AB 939 solid waste planning documents. These documents include the Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE), the Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE), and the Non-Disposal Facility Element (NDFE).

During the construction of new projects, construction wastes are generated. The proposed project will result in the generation of construction wastes. Construction-generated wastes consist primarily of inert materials that would otherwise take up valuable landfill space. Reducing construction wastes at construction sites conserves landfill space, reduces the environmental impact of producing new materials, and can

E12

MAY-02-2003 15:18 FROM:ENVIRO

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TO:1 949 366 4750

P.005'007

reduce overall building project expenses through avoided purchase/disposal costs. Construction wastes can be reused in other construction projects or recycled. The recycling coordinator for the City of San Clemente can provide the names and locations of recycling facilities in the project area that will accept construction wastes.

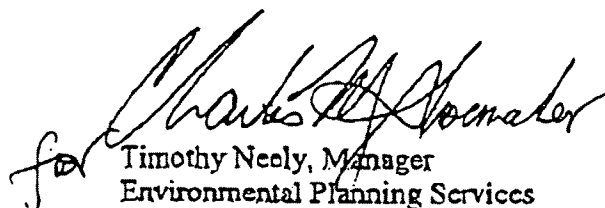
Wood waste offers an excellent potential for reuse due to the ease of separating the wood during the various stages of construction. Cut-offs and scraps constitute a relatively clean and homogeneous waste stream that can make an excellent feedstock for engineered wood production. This is a highly desirable form of wood waste that processors are eager to obtain. To minimize disposal costs and potentially generate income, contractors should contact local wood waste processors and inquire about setting up drop boxes on site for wood waste scraps. Contractors should also consider collecting pallets and crates that building materials and equipment are shipped in. There are usually several businesses listed in the phone directories, under "pallets" or "skids" that collect and manufacture pallets.

We recommend that this project address a waste reduction plan for the construction wastes generated from this project. This plan should be coordinated with the recycling coordinator for the City of San Clemente to help ensure that A.B. 939 requirements are properly addressed.

E12
(cont.)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the MND. If you have any questions, please contact Charlotte Harryman at (714) 834-2522.

Sincerely,


Timothy Neely, Manager
Environmental Planning Services

- Attachments (2): 1. Standard Two-Rail County Fence
2. Sample Picture of Two-Rail County Fence

ch